



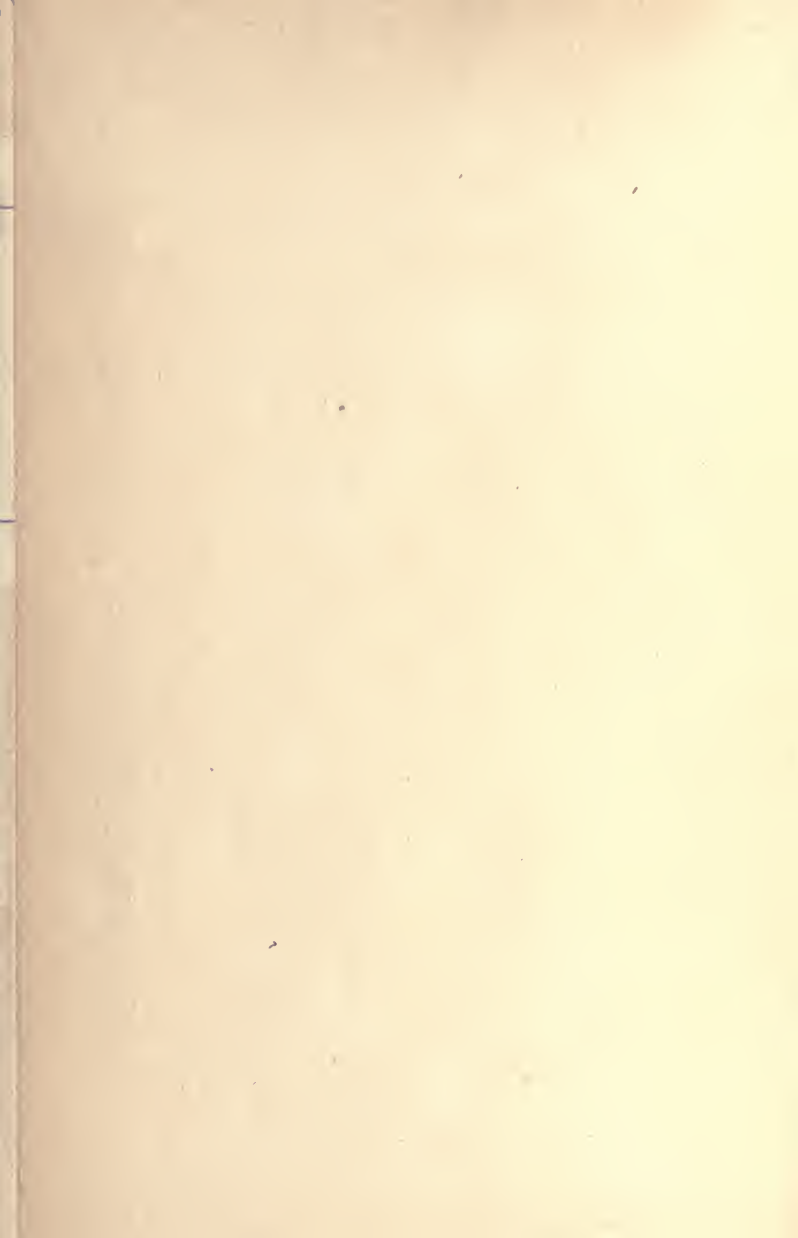
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# HISTORICAL EVIDENCES

OF THE

## OLD TESTAMENT.



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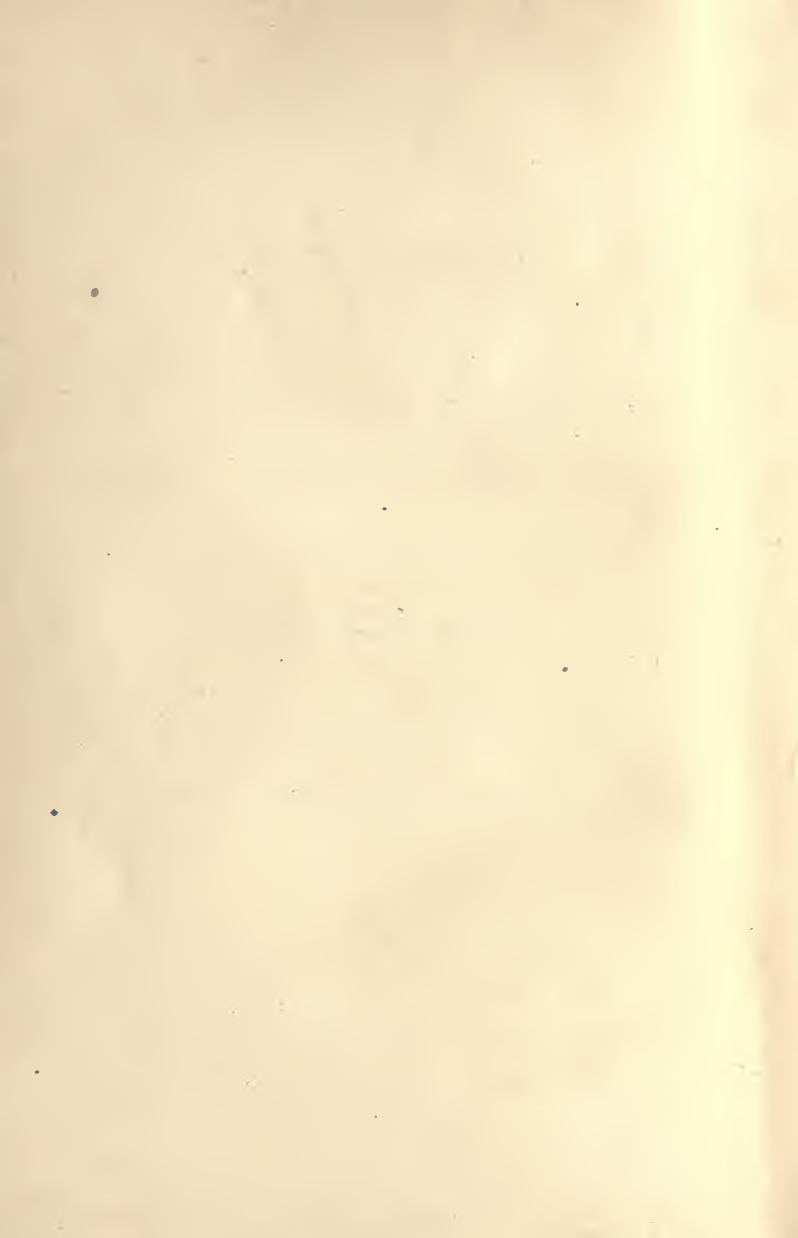


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THE WITNESS  
OF  
ANCIENT MONUMENTS  
TO THE  
OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES.

BY  
A. H. SAYCE, M. A.,  
AUTHOR OF "FRESH LIGHT FROM THE MONUMENTS," "ASSYRIAN  
GRAMMAR," ETC.

## ARGUMENT OF THE TRACT.

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THE credibility of Scripture has been assailed since the beginning of the present century on the ground that the narratives contained in it are not contemporaneous with the events they profess to record, 1, because they represent an incredible amount of civilization as existing in the ancient Eastern world, and are inconsistent with the accounts of classical writers; and, 2, because writing was little known or practised by the Jews at so early a period. It is shown that both these arguments are overthrown by the discovery and decipherment of the ancient monuments of Egypt and Western Asia, which prove the minute accuracy of the Biblical accounts and the prevalence of books and readers in early times.

Wherever the Biblical history comes into contact with that of its powerful neighbors, and can thus be tested by the contemporaneous monuments of Egypt and Assyro-Babylonia, it is confirmed and illustrated even in the smallest details. Typical examples of this are taken from the monuments of Babylonia, Egypt, and Assyria. The extraordinary fidelity of the Biblical narrative to facts which had been utterly forgotten long before the classical era is further illustrated by the recovery of the great Hittite Empire, to which there are hitherto unsuspected allusions in the Old Testament.

The discovery of the Moabite Stone, and more especially the Siloam inscription, prove that the Jews in the age of the Kings were well acquainted with the art of writing on parchment or papyrus. And since the Babylonians possessed libraries, and were a literary people, there is no reason why Abraham and his descendants should not also have been able to read or write.

Modern exploration and research, consequently, have shown, 1, that the picture of Oriental history presented in the Old Testament is strictly consonant with the facts wherever it can be tested by contemporaneous monuments; and, 2, that the art of writing was practised by the Israelites at an early date. Hence the argument against the contemporary character of the Old Testament records falls to the ground, and with it the argument against their historical credibility. This, on the other hand, is confirmed by their agreement in details with the contents of the inscriptions.





THE

# WITNESS OF ANCIENT MONUMENTS

TO THE

## OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES.

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EVER since the beginning of the present century the historical credibility of the Old Testament Scriptures has been bitterly assailed. The methods that have been employed for resolving the earlier history of Greece and Rome into myth and legend have been turned against the ancient history of the Jewish race. Every effort has been made to show that the books of the Old Testament are a *farrago* of documents and interpolations of various ages, few of which, however, are contemporaneous with the events they profess to record. The events themselves have been treated as the products of distorted tradition or romance, or else assigned a purely mythical origin. Chedorlaomer and his allies have been transformed into solar heroes, the twelve sons of Jacob into

the twelve zodiacal signs, and the conquest of Canaan by Joshua into the daily struggle of night and dawn. This skeptical criticism has rested on two main assumptions: firstly, that writing was unknown or but little used in Palestine until shortly before the Babylonish Exile; and, secondly, that the notices of foreign countries in the Old Testament implied an inconceivable amount of civilization in the ancient East, and were inconsistent with the accounts handed down by classical historians.

The same half-century, however, which has witnessed these assaults on the Old Testament has also witnessed the discovery and decipherment of monuments which belong to Old Testament times. At the very moment when the assailants of Scripture had adopted new methods of attack which could no longer be met by the old modes of defence, God was raising up unexpected testimonies to the truth of Biblical history. The ancient civilizations of Egypt, of Babylonia, and of Assyria now lie outspread before us as fully and clearly as the civilization of imperial Rome. Sennacherib and Tiglath-pileser, Nebuchadnezzar and Cyrus, speak to us, as it were, face to face, and tell us in their own words the story of the deeds in which they themselves took part; and we can trace the very forms of the letters in which

Isaiah and Jeremiah recorded their prophecies. The stones have cried out on behalf of the "oracles of God," and have shown that the pictures of ancient history given in the old Testament are such as only contemporaries could have drawn, and that books and the art of writing were almost as well known to the age of Hezekiah as they are to the England of to-day.

To prove this we will first take a few typical examples from the monuments of the chief nations of the ancient East which illustrate the leading periods of Old Testament history, and then point out how utterly mistaken is the idea that the people over whom David and Hezekiah ruled were illiterate.

The fourteenth chapter of Genesis contains an account of an expedition against Palestine made by Chedorlaomer, king of Elam, and his allies, one of whom was Amraphel, king of Shinar, or Southern Babylonia. The account has been condemned as unhistorical, partly because a Babylonian campaign against a distant country like Palestine was held to be incredible at so early a period, partly because a king of Elam appears as leader of the invading army. But recent discoveries have shown that the whole account is in strict accordance with the actual fact. Long before the days of Abraham we find from the mon-

uments that the Babylonian kings carried their arms as far as Palestine, and even crossed over into the island of Cyprus, while one of them claims to have conquered the Sinaitic Peninsula. At the period, moreover, to which we must refer the life of Abraham, Babylonia was in subjection to Elam, and was divided into two States, the southern of which was called Sumer or Shinar. The very name of Chedorlaomer can be shown to be of Elamite origin. Lagamar was an Elamite deity, and *Kudur* (or *chedor*), in the language of Elam, meant "servant." Bricks are now in the British Museum stamped with the inscriptions of another Elamite prince, Kudur-Mabuk, "the servant of Mabuk," whose name is formed precisely the same way as that of Chedor-laomer. From these we learn that he had conquered Babylonia, and that his son Eri-Aku ruled at Larsa. Now Eri-Aku is letter for letter the same name as Arioch, and Larsa may be identified with Ellasar, the city of which we are told in Genesis that Arioch was king. Here, therefore, where the book of Genesis touches upon Babylonian history, contemporaneous monuments prove that its statements are faithful to the most minute details.

Just as the life of Abraham touches upon Babylonian history, so the Exodus brings us into contact with Egyptian history. The expulsion of

the Hyksos or Shepherd kings, in whose time the children of Israel had come into Egypt, brought with it the rise of a new king, "who knew not Joseph," and of a dynasty hostile to all those who had been favored by the Hyksos princes, or were of Asiatic origin. The oppression culminated in the long reign of Rameses II., for whom the Israelites built the cities of Raamses and Pithom. Dr. Brugsch has shown that the city of Rameses, or Raamses, was the name given to Zoan or Tanis, the old capital of the Hyksos, after its reconstruction by Rameses II., and the city of Pithom was discovered only two years ago in the mounds of Tel el-Maskhuta. Tel el-Maskhuta is near the now famous site of Tel el-Kebir, and was called Pa-Tum, the city of "the Setting Sun," by the Egyptians. Inscriptions found on the spot prove that it was built by Rameses II., and was intended for a "storehouse" of corn or treasure. The store-chambers themselves have been laid bare. They are very strongly constructed, and are divided by partitions from eight to ten feet thick. The bricks, like most of those found in Egypt, have been baked in the sun, some of them being mixed with straw, and others not. As the discoverer, M. Naville, has observed, we may see in these strawless bricks the work of the oppressed people when the order came: "Thus saith the



Pharaoh, I will not give you straw." The Pharaoh of the Exodus, however, must have been the son of Rameses, Menephtah II., whose reign lasted but a short time. It was full of trouble and disaster. In his fifth year Northern Egypt was overrun and devastated by a great invasion of the Libyans, which was with difficulty repulsed; while three years later a body of Bedouins made its way from Edom to the land of Goshen along part of the very road which the Israelites must have traversed. The official report of the migration states that they had passed "through the fortress of Khetam, which is situated in Thuku (or Succoth), to the lakes of the city of Pithom, which are in the land of Succoth, in order that they might feed themselves and their herds on the possessions of the Pharaoh." Khetam seems to be the Etham of Scripture. Exod. 13:20.

As Egypt declined, the kingdom of Assyria grew in power; and it was with Assyria rather than with Egypt that later Israelitish history had to do. Illustrations and confirmations of Holy Writ have poured in abundantly upon us during the last few years from the mounds and ruins of Assyria, and more especially from the sculptured stones and clay books of the Assyrian capital, Nineveh. At first it was objected that the system of interpreting the Assyrian monuments could

not be correct, since "they would never have so largely concerned themselves, as they were represented as doing, with a petty and obscure kingdom like that of Judah;" but now that no doubt any longer hangs over the decipherment of the inscriptions, it is found that they "concerned themselves" with Judah and Israel even more than was originally suspected. From the time of Jehu downwards the Assyrian kings were brought into frequent contact and intercourse with the people of Samaria and Jerusalem; and the records they have left us not only confirm the statements of the Old Testament, but also throw light on many passages which have hitherto been obscure.

"Akhabbu of Sirlâ," or Ahab of Israel, is the first king of Samaria mentioned in the Assyrian texts. He brought 2,000 chariots and 10,000 men to the help of Hadadezer, or Ben-hadad II., of Damascus, and his allies, in a great battle against the Assyrians at Karkar or Aroer. This battle must have taken place shortly before his death and after the conclusion of the alliance between Ahab and Ben-hadad which is recorded in 1 Kings 20:34. Hadadezer's successor was Khazail, or Hazael, according to the Bible as well as the Assyrian monuments. Hazael was defeated by the Assyrian monarch, who, after a vain at-

tempt to capture Damascus, marched to the shores of the Mediterranean and there received the tribute of "Yahua, the son of Khumri." Yahua is Jehu, and Khumri Omri, though in calling Jehu his son the Assyrians were misinformed, as he was only Omri's successor. Omri, however, had been the founder of Samaria, which is frequently termed Beth-omri, or "House of Omri," in the inscriptions, and any prince who came after him might well be supposed by a stranger to have been his descendant. The tribute-bearers of Jehu can still be seen sculptured on a small black obelisk brought from the ruins of Calah by Sir A. H. Layard, and now in the British Museum. They carry with them bars of gold and silver, a golden vase and a golden spoon, besides cups and goblets of gold, pieces of lead, a sceptre, and precious woods. Their features are those which even now characterize the Jewish race, and their fringed robes descend to their ankles.

After the time of Jehu the Assyrian monuments are silent for some time about affairs in the West. Rimmon-nirari, however, a king who reigned from B. C. 810 to 781, reduced Damascus to a condition of vassalage, and thus prevented it for a time from being dangerous to its neighbors. This explains the successes of Jeroboam II.



against the Syrians. He was a contemporary of Rimmon-nirari, and "restored the coast of Israel from the entering of Hamath unto the sea of the plain, according to the word of the Lord God of Israel, which he spake by the hand of his servant Jonah, which was of Gath-hepher." 2 Kings 14:25.

The dynasty to which Rimmon-nirari belonged was overthrown by a rebellion at the head of which was a military adventurer named Pul, who usurped the throne under the name of Tiglath-pileser II., in April, B. C. 745. He founded the second Assyrian Empire, and introduced a new system of policy into the East. He and his successors aimed at uniting the whole of Western Asia into a single State. For this purpose they not only made extensive conquests, but also organized and consolidated them under governors appointed by the Assyrian king. Hence it is that from this time forward Palestine was exposed to continual attacks on the part of Assyria. Its princes were made tributary, and when they attempted to rebel were punished with death or exile and the captivity of their people. Tiglath-pileser is the first Assyrian monarch mentioned in the Old Testament, because, as we now learn from the monuments, he was the first who led his armies against the Israelites.

According to 2 Kings 15:29, "In the days of Pekah, king of Israel, came Tiglath-pileser, king of Assyria, and took Ijon and Abel-beth-maachah and Janoah and Kedesh and Hazor and Gilead and Galilee, all the land of Naphtali, and carried them captive to Assyria."

Tiglath-pileser, on his side, tells us in an inscription, which is unfortunately much mutilated, that in his eleventh year, B. C. 734, he marched against the West; and, after overrunning some of the Phœnician States, captured the towns of Gilead and Abel-beth-maachah, "which belonged to the land of Beth-omri," and annexed the whole district to Assyria, setting Assyrian governors over it. He then goes on to describe his conquest of Gaza, and adds, "Some of the inhabitants of the land of Beth-omri, with their goods, I carried to Assyria. Pekah, their king, I put to death; I raised Hosea to the sovereignty over them." This shows that the conspiracy against Pekah described in 2 Kings 15:30 was carried out under the protection and with the help of the Assyrian king.

Tiglath-pileser, under his original name of Pul, had already made himself known to the Israelites. Menahem had become his tributary and had given him "a thousand talents of silver, that his hand might be with him to confirm the

kingdom in his hand." 2 Kings 15:19. This event also is referred to by Tiglath-pileser in his annals, where he states that in B. C. 739 he received tribute from "Menahem of Samaria" and "Rezin of Damascus."

Rezin was the last king of Damascus. Isaiah had prophesied that Damascus and its sovereign should speedily fall, and in 2 Kings 16 we are told how this came about. Ahaz, attacked by the confederate armies of Pekah and Rezin, called in the powerful aid of Tiglath-pileser, and purchased his assistance with the gold and silver of the temple and the royal palace. Then "the king of Assyria went up against Damascus, and took it, and carried the people of it captive to Kir, and slew Rezin." We can now read the history of the campaign at greater length on the monuments of the Assyrian king himself. After receiving the Jewish bribe, we learn that he marched into Syria in B. C. 734. Rezin was defeated in battle, his chariots destroyed, his officers captured and impaled, while he himself escaped to Damascus, where he was closely besieged. The Syrian territory was swept with fire and sword, the sixteen districts into which it was divided were "overwhelmed as with a flood," and the beautiful trees and gardens surrounding the town were cut down and destroyed. Damascus, however,

proved too strong to be taken by assault; so leaving a force before it to reduce it by famine, Tiglath-pileser overran the northern part of Israel, and, as we have seen, carried away the inhabitants of Gilead and Naphtali. He then entered Samaria, and placed Hosea on the throne; and subsequently returned to Damascus, which fell in B. C. 732, after a siege of two years. Rezin was put to death and a great court held, at which the subject princes of the neighboring countries presented themselves with gifts. Among them was Jehoahaz of Judah, whom the Biblical writers call Ahaz, omitting the sacred name of the God of Israel from the name of a king who was unworthy to bear it. It was when Ahaz was at Damascus that he saw the altar the pattern of which he sent to Urijah the priest.

Not the least of the services rendered to students of the Old Testament by the decipherment of the Assyrian inscriptions is the restoration of the true chronology of the Israelite and Jewish kings. As is well known, this chronology has long been the despair of historians, and the most contradictory schemes for reducing it to order have been confidently put forward. The Assyrians reckoned time by the names of certain officers who were changed from year to year, and corresponded with the eponymous archons of ancient

Athens. Lists of these Assyrian officers have been preserved, extending from B. C. 909 to the closing days of the monarchy, and we can thus accurately fix the dates of the various events which marked the terms of office of the successive eponymes. In this way some difficulties which formerly obscured the chronology of the books of Kings may be cleared away.

Tiglath-pileser died, it appears, B. C. 727, and the crown was usurped by Elulæos, who took the name of Shalmaneser IV. He carried Hoséa into captivity and laid siege to Samaria, as we are told in the Bible. "The king of Assyria," however, who actually captured Samaria was not Shalmaneser, but his successor Sargon, who seized the throne after Shalmaneser's death, apparently B. C. 722. Immediately afterwards Samaria fell; and Sargon informs us that 27,280 of its inhabitants were sent into exile, and an Assyrian governor set over it who was ordered to raise each year the same amount of tribute as that which had been paid by Hosea. The small number of persons carried captive shows that only the upper classes were transported from their homes, as was the case with the Jews who were carried captive by Nebuchadnezzar along with Jehoiachin; the poorer portion of the population, who were not considered responsible for



the revolt from Assyria, being allowed to remain. The exiles were settled on the banks of the Habor or Khabur, a river which falls into the Euphrates, and flows from a country called Gozan by the Assyrians, as well as in the cities of the Medes. These had been conquered by Sargon, and their old inhabitants sent elsewhere.

Sargon's name occurs but once in the Old Testament, Isa. 20:1, and as no trace of it could be found in classical writers it was objected to as fictitious. Now, however, we find that Sargon, the father of Sennacherib, was one of the greatest monarchs who ever ruled over Assyria, and that his reign lasted as long as seventeen years. The event referred to by Isaiah, when the Tartan or commander-in-chief was ordered to invest Ashdod, is recorded in Sargon's annals, and formed part of the history of a campaign which has thrown new and unexpected light upon certain passages of Scripture.

The prophecy contained in the tenth chapter of Isaiah has been alleged to be contrary to fact and to have never been fulfilled. When Sennacherib invaded Judæa he did not march upon Jerusalem from the northeast, as Isaiah describes the Assyrians as doing, but from the southwest; while Jerusalem was not captured, as Isaiah implies would be the case. Indeed the whole spirit

of the prophecy delivered by Isaiah when Sennacherib threatened the city, Isa. 37, is in striking contrast to that contained in the tenth chapter. If we turn to another prophecy, Isa. 22, we shall find a picture placed before our eyes which is even more inconsistent with what we know about the campaign of Sennacherib. Here Jerusalem is described as being worn out with a long siege; its defenders are dying of famine; the Assyrians are at its gates; and the prophet declares that it is about to fall. As long as it was thought necessary to refer these prophecies to the invasion of Sennacherib, they were hopelessly irreconcilable with the real facts.

But all difficulties have now been removed and the accuracy of Scripture thoroughly vindicated. We gather from the Assyrian monuments that ten years before the invasion of Judah by Sennacherib there had been a previous invasion by his father Sargon. A Chaldæan chief named Merodach-baladan had made himself king of Babylon on the death of Shalmaneser, and succeeded for some years in maintaining himself against his dangerous neighbor, the Assyrian king. As Sargon, however, became more and more powerful, Merodach-baladan began to make endeavors to form a vast league against him. Ambassadors were sent for the purpose to Elam

on the east, and to Egypt, Judah, and other Syrian States on the west. We learn from the Bible that Hezekiah's recent recovery from illness formed the pretext for their visit to him. The league was formed; but before its members had time to act in concert Sargon became aware of it, and at once marched against Palestine. "The widespreading land of Judah" was overrun and its capital taken; Ashdod, which had been a centre of disaffection, was razed to the ground, the Moabites and Edomites were punished, and the Egyptian king was prevented from coming to the help of his allies. It was this invasion of Judah and this capture of Jerusalem to which Isaiah refers in the tenth and twenty-second chapters of his prophecies; and the Biblical statements are thus shown to be an exact representation of the actual facts. In the following year (B. C. 710) Sargon turned upon Merodach-baladan. The Elamites were defeated, Babylon was taken, and the Chaldæan prince driven to the marshes at the head of the Persian Gulf, while Sargon proclaimed himself king of Babylonia.

Sargon was murdered by his soldiers, and succeeded by his son Sennacherib, who mounted the throne on the 12th of Ab or July, B. C. 705. Trusting to the support of Tirhakah, the Ethiopian king of Egypt, Hezekiah threw off his alle-



giance to Assyria, and was followed in this act by the Phœnicians and other neighboring States. It was not until B. C. 701, the fourth year of his reign, that Sennacherib found himself free to punish the rebels. Then came that memorable campaign the latter part of which is described in such detail by Isaiah and in the second book of Kings, and which ended so disastrously for the vainglorious Assyrian king. An account of it is given with almost equal detail by Sennacherib himself, though the final disaster is naturally glossed over, and only the earlier successes of the expedition recorded. More than one version of the account has been found among the clay books of Nineveh. Here is the translation of one of them:

“In my third campaign I went to the land of the Hittites. The fear of the greatness of my majesty overwhelmed Elulæos, king of Sidon, and he fled afar in the middle of the sea (i. e., to Cyprus), and his land I subjected. As for Great Sidon and Little Sidon, Beth-Zeth, Sarepta, Makhallib, Usu, Ekdippa, and Akko (Acre), his strong cities, the fenced-in fortresses and villages, the barracks of his troops, the fear of the weapons of Assur, my lord, overwhelmed them, and they knelt at my feet. I set Ethbaal on the royal throne over them, and laid upon him the tribute

and taxes due to my majesty each year for ever. Menahem of Samsi-murun, Ethbaal of Sidon, Abdilihti of Arvad, Uru-melech of Gebal, Metinti of Ashdod, Pedael of Ammon, Chemosh-nadab of Moab, Melech-ram of Edom, all the kings of the west, brought the full amount of their rich gifts and treasures to my presence and kissed my feet. But Zedekiah, king of Ashkelon, who had not submitted to my yoke, himself, the gods of the house of his fathers, his wife, his sons, his daughters, and his brothers, the seed of the house of his fathers, I removed, and I sent him to Assyria. I set over the men of Ashkelon, Sarludari, the son of Rukipti, their former king, and I imposed upon him the payment of tribute and the homage due to my majesty, and he became a vassal. In the course of my campaign I approached and captured Beth-dagon, Joppa, Bene-berak, and Azur, the cities of Zedekiah which did not submit at once to my yoke, and I carried away their spoil. The priests, the chief men, and the common people of Ekron, who had thrown into chains their king Padi (Pedaiah) because he was faithful to his oaths to Assyria, and had given him up to Hezekiah the Jew, who imprisoned him like an enemy in a dark dungeon, feared in their hearts. The king of Egypt, the bowmen, the chariots, and the horses of the king of Ethiopia, had gath-

ered together innumerable forces and gone to their assistance. In sight of the town of Eltekeh was their order of battle drawn up; they summoned their troops (to the fight). Trusting in Assur, my lord, I fought with them and overthrew them. My hands took the captains of the chariots and the sons of the king of Egypt, as well as the captains of the chariots of the king of Ethiopia, alive in the midst of the battle. I approached and captured the towns of Eltekeh and Timnath, and I carried away their spoil. I marched against the city of Ekron, and put to death the priests and the chief men who had committed the sin (of rebellion), and I hung up their bodies on stakes all round the city. The citizens who had done wrong and wickedness I counted as a spoil; as for the rest of them who had done no sin or crime, in whom no fault was found, I proclaimed their freedom (from punishment). I had Padi, their king, brought out from the midst of Jerusalem, and I seated him on the throne of royalty over them, and I laid upon him the tribute due to my majesty. But as for Hezekiah of Judah, who had not submitted to my yoke, forty-six of his strong cities, together with innumerable fortresses and small towns which depended on them, by overthrowing the walls and open attack, by battle, engines, and battering-rams, I besieged, I cap-

tured; I brought out from the midst of them and counted as a spoil 200,150 persons, great and small, male and female, besides mules, asses, camels, oxen, and sheep without number. Hezekiah himself I shut up like a bird in a cage in Jerusalem, his royal city. I built a line of forts against him, and I kept back his heel from going forth out of the great gate of his city. I cut off his cities which I had spoiled from the midst of his land, and gave them to Metinti, king of Ashdod, Padi, king of Ekron, and Zil-baal, king of Gaza, and I made his country small. In addition to their former tribute and yearly gifts, I added other tribute and the homage due to my majesty, and I laid it upon them. The fear of the greatness of my majesty overwhelmed him, even Hezekiah, and he sent after me to Nineveh, my royal city, by way of gift and tribute, the Arabs and his body-guard whom he had brought for the defence of Jerusalem, his royal city, and had furnished with pay, along with thirty talents, eight hundred talents of pure silver, carbuncles and other precious stones, a couch of ivory, thrones of ivory, an elephant's hide, an elephant's tusk, rare woods of all kinds, a vast treasure, as well as the eunuchs of his palace, and dancing-men and dancing-women; and he sent his ambassador to offer homage."

In this account Sennacherib discreetly omits

to mention why it was that he never captured Jerusalem itself, after all the preparations he had made for doing so, or why he did not succeed in punishing Hezekiah as he was accustomed to punish other rebellious princes. His silence on this point, and the fact that he never again ventured to invade Palestine, are the strongest possible confirmations of the truth of the Biblical story. In order to cover the disastrous ending of his campaign he has transposed the period at which Hezekiah's embassy was sent to him, and made it follow the despatch of the rab-shakeh or chamberlain to Jerusalem. It really preceded the latter event, and was a vain attempt on the part of Hezekiah to buy off the punishment threatened him by the Assyrian king. The embassy reached Sennacherib just after his capture of Lachish in the south of Judah, and there is now a bas-relief in the British Museum which represents him seated on his throne, with the inhabitants of the unfortunate city kneeling before him. An inscription in front of the king reads: "Sennacherib, the king of multitudes, the king of Assyria, sat on an upright throne, and the spoil of the city of Lachish passed before him."

Before we leave the Assyrian records we must notice a statement of Scripture which has been the subject of much hostile criticism, but has now



been curiously verified by modern research. In 2 Chron. 33:11 it is said that the king of Assyria, after crushing the revolt of Manasseh, carried him away captive to Babylon. The fact is not mentioned in the books of Kings, and it has been asked, How could a king of Assyria carry his prisoners to Babylon? Had the fact been an invention of a later age, when the history of Assyria had been forgotten, we may feel quite sure that Nineveh and not Babylon would have been assigned as the place of Manasseh's imprisonment. But the supposed error turns out to be a strong verification of the Scriptural narrative. Manasseh was the contemporary of Sennacherib's son and successor, Esar-haddon, who alludes to him by name in more than one inscription; and Esar-haddon not only rebuilt Babylon, which had been destroyed by his father, but held his court there during half the year. That Manasseh should afterwards have been pardoned and restored to his throne is also in full accordance with the evidence of the monuments. Rebel princes were so treated not unfrequently. Thus, Assur-bani-pal, the successor of Esar-haddon, tells us that, after sending a revolted Egyptian prince to Nineveh, bound hand and foot with iron fetters, he forgave the prisoner and allowed him to return to his kingdom.

Jerusalem was destined to fall by the hand, not of an Assyrian, but of a Babylonian monarch. The Babylonian Empire of Nebuchadnezzar rose on the ruins of that of Assyria; but though we have many inscriptions of the great Babylonian king relating to his buildings, only a small fragment of his annals has as yet been found. This, however, disposes of the doubts that have been expressed as to the fulfilment of Jeremiah's prophecy of the Babylonian conquest of Egypt. It tells us that, in his thirty-seventh year (B. C. 568), Nebuchadnezzar invaded Egypt and defeated the Egyptian king Amasis. Egyptian monuments supplement this mutilated record. We learn from them that the invading forces penetrated the country as far as the extreme south, and that it was not until they had reached Assouan that they were driven back again by the Egyptian general, Hor. Only a year ago an interesting discovery was made in the mounds of Tel Defenneh, the ancient Daphnê, on the western side of the Suez Canal. This consisted of small clay cylinders covered with Babylonian writing, which enumerated the titles and building operations of Nebuchadnezzar. They must have been buried in this frontier town of Egypt as a token of the Babylonian conquest of the country.

The history of the overthrow of Nebuchad-

nezzar's empire has now been told to us by Cyrus himself. Two long inscriptions of his have been discovered in the ruins of Babylon, one of which gives, in chronological order, the events which marked the reign of Nabonnidus, the father of Belshazzar, and the last Babylonian king, as well as the history of the final conquest of Babylon; while the other is a proclamation put forth by Cyrus not long after the defeat and death of Nabonnidus. In this he declares that "Bel-merodach, the great lord, the restorer of his people, beheld with joy the deeds of his vicegerent (Cyrus), who was righteous in hand and heart. To his city of Babylon he summoned his march, and bade him take the road to Babylon; like a friend and a comrade he went to his side."

When the conquest was completed Cyrus assembled the various peoples whom the Babylonian kings had carried into captivity, and restored them and their gods to their own lands. Among these peoples were, as the Bible teaches us, the Jews, who returned, not with the images of false gods, but with the sacred vessels of the ruined temple.

Such, then, are some of the most striking verifications of the truth of the old Testament record where it refers to the great kingdoms and empires that surrounded the chosen people. In every case



where we can test it by contemporaneous monuments, the authenticity of which is doubted by no one, we find it confirmed and explained even in the minutest points. Such accuracy would be impossible if the Biblical narratives had been composed at a later period than that to which the events belong. Legend soon takes the place of history in the East, and the classical writers show how quickly the real annals of Egypt and Assyria were forgotten. Monumental research has not only proved the truth of the events recorded in Scripture, it also proves that the account of these events must have been written by contemporaries. On no other hypothesis is the minute accuracy which distinguishes it to be explained.

This accuracy has lately been illustrated by a startling and unexpected discovery. Besides the small Hittite tribe settled in the south of Judah, of whom we hear so much in connection with the lives of the patriarchs, reference is more than once made in the books of Kings to Hittites living in the north of Syria. Solomon, we are told, imported horses from Egypt, which were sold again to "all the kings of the Hittites", and the kings of Aram or Syria. 1 Kin. 10 : 29. Again, when God had sent a panic upon the Syrian army which was besieging Samaria, the soldiers of Ben-hadad supposed that "the king of Israel hath hired

against us the kings of the Hittites and the kings of the Egyptians." 2 Kings 7 : 6.

Objectors to the historical truth of the Old Testament narrative, like Prof. F. Newman, declared that these allusions to northern Hittites destroyed its credibility. No Hittites in the north of Syria were known to classical writers; and the Hittites of Genesis lived in the southern part of Judæa. But first the Egyptian and then the Assyrian monuments proved that not only did Hittite tribes inhabit the very district to which the notices in the books of Kings would assign them, but also that they were once a very powerful and important people. In the time of the great Egyptian monarch, Rameses II., the oppressor of the children of Israel, they contended on equal terms with the Egyptians themselves; the Egyptian king was glad finally to secure a peace by marrying a Hittite princess. For several centuries they successfully withstood the power of Assyria; and it was not until the reign of Sargon that their capital, Carchemish, was at last taken by storm, and the last Hittite sovereign replaced by an Assyrian governor. In the age of the Exodus they had carried their arms across Asia Minor as far as the shores of the Ægean, and the empire they founded in Asia Minor has left remains in the neighborhood of the river Halys, as well as on the

sculptured rocks of Lydia. They had invented a peculiar system of pictorial writing, and their art, though based on Babylonian models, was also of a peculiar kind. The early art of Greece was indebted to it, and through the art of Greece the art of modern Europe as well. The site of their northern capital, Carchemish, was discovered at a place now called Jerablûs, on the Euphrates, by Mr. George Smith, during the ill-fated expedition which eventually cost him his life. Since then the ruins of Carchemish have been partially explored, and some of the Hittite monuments disinterred among them are now in the British Museum. Carchemish, however, was not the only capital the Hittites possessed. The Bible speaks of their "kings" in the plural, and in agreement with this we find from the Egyptian inscriptions that they had also a southern capital on the Orontes, called Kadesh. A recent discovery has shown that Kadesh as well as Carchemish is mentioned in the Old Testament. Manuscripts make it clear that the Septuagint text of 2 Sam. 24:6 reads "Kadesh of the Hittites," instead of the "Tah-tim-hodshi" of the Hebrew text. David's census, according to this, was taken throughout the whole extent of his empire, which then included Damascus, and consequently bordered on the Hittite Kadesh in the north. Here again, therefore,

modern research has proved the accuracy of the Old Testament record in a point so minute as to have escaped the notice of the most eagle-eyed critic. Indeed, the very existence of the Hittite Kadesh had been forgotten since its destruction by the Syrian kings, shortly after the age of David, until it was again brought to light by the decipherment of the Egyptian texts.

The recovery of the long-forgotten Hittite empire has also revealed some more "undesigned coincidences," as they may be called, between the statements of the sacred writers and the discoveries of modern research. While making war upon the Syrians, David is represented as being on friendly terms with Hamath. Toi, king of Hamath, in fact, sent his son Joram to David with presents, "because he had fought against Hadadezer and smitten him; for Hadadezer had wars with Toi." 2 Sam. 8:10. Now Hamath turns out to have been a Hittite kingdom, and the Hittites and their Syrian neighbors belonged to different races, and were continually engaged in war. It was therefore natural that Toi should have made alliance with David, who had broken the power of the common enemy. This alliance between Hamath and Judah must have lasted down to the time when Hamath was reduced by Sargon and became an Assyrian dependency.

Tiglath-pileser II. informs us that Uzziah of Judah was the ally of Yahu-bihdi or Jeho-bihad, king of Hamath. This explains a passage of Scripture, 2 Kin. 14:28, which has long presented a difficulty, though the difficulty is now seen to have been due to our own ignorance, and to be really a striking confirmation of the truth of the inspired record. When it is said that Jeroboam II. recovered "Hamath, which was (allied) with Judah, for Israel," we are supplied with the middle link of a chain which begins with the embassy of Toi to David, and ends with the alliance between Uzziah and Yahu-bihdi. It is noticeable that Yahu-bihdi and Joram, the son of Toi, are the only Gentiles known to us whose names are compounded with that of the God of Israel.

It now only remains to point out how recent discoveries have shown that writing was known and practised in Judah at the time to which the larger part of the Old Testament Scriptures professes to belong. There have been two discoveries which more especially make this clear. These are the discoveries of the Moabite Stone and the Siloam Inscription. The Moabite Stone was a monument erected by Mesha, the contemporary of Ahab, who is called "a sheepmaster" in 2 Kin. 3:4. It is consequently as old as the ninth century before the Christian era, and was



discovered in 1869 by Mr. Klein, a German missionary, among the ruins of Dhibân, the ancient Dibon. Owing to an unfortunate dispute for the possession of the stone, it was broken into pieces by the Arabs, though not until after some imperfect squeezes of it had been made. Most of the fragments have since been recovered and fitted together, but the concluding lines are still missing. A translation of the text will show how historically important it is:

“I, Mesha, am the son of Chemosh-gad, king of Moab, the Dibonite. My father reigned over Moab thirty years, and I reigned after my father. And I erected this stone to Chemosh at Kirkha, a (stone of) salvation, for he saved me from all despoilers, and made me see my desire upon all my enemies, even upon Omri, king of Israel. Now they afflicted Moab many days, for Chemosh was angry with his land. His son succeeded him; and he also said, I will afflict Moab. In my days (Chemosh) said, (Let us go) and I will see my desire upon him and his house, and I will destroy Israel with an everlasting destruction. Now Omri took the land of Medeba, and (the enemy) occupied it in (his days and in) the days of his son, forty years. And Chemosh (had mercy) on it in my days; and I fortified Baal-meon, and I made therein the tank, and I fortified Kiriatha-



im. For the men of Gad dwelt in the land of (Atar)oth from of old, and the king (of) Israel fortified for himself Ataroth, and I assaulted the wall and captured it, and killed all the warriors of the wall for the well-pleasing of Chemosh and Moab; and I removed from it all the spoil, and (offered) it before Chemosh in Kirjath; and I placed therein the men of Siran and the men of Mochrath. And Chemosh said to me, Go, take Nebo against Israel. (And I) went in the night, and I fought against it from the break of dawn till noon, and I took it and slew in all 7,000 (men, but I did not kill) the women (and) maidens, for (I) devoted them to Ashtar-chemosh; and I took from it the vessels of Yahveh [Jehovah], and offered them before Chemosh. And the king of Israel fortified Jahaz, and occupied it, when he made war against me; and Chemosh drove him out before (me, and) I took from Moab 200 men, all its poor, and placed them in Jahaz, and took it to annex it to Dibon. I built Kirkha, the wall of the forest, and the wall of the city, and I built the gates thereof, and I built the towers thereof, and I built the palace, and I made the prisons for the criminals within the walls. And there was no cistern in the wall at Kirkha, and I said to all the people, Make for yourselves, every man, a cistern in his house. And I dug the ditch for Kirkha by means of the

(captive) men of Israel. I built Aroer, and I made the road across the Arnon. I built Beth-bamoth, for it was destroyed; I built Bezer, for it had been cut (down) by the armed men of Dibon, for all Dibon was now loyal; and I reigned from Bikran, which I added to my land, and I built (Beth-gamul) and Beth-diblathaim and Beth-baal-meon, and I placed there the poor (people) of the land. And as to Horonaim, (the men of Edom) dwelt therein (from of old). And Chemosh said to me, Go down, make war against Horonaim, and take (it. And I assaulted it and I took it, and) Chemosh (restored it) in my days. Wherefore I made . . . ”

The story told by Mesha and the account given in the Bible supplement one another. Mesha delivered Moab from the yoke of the Israelites during the reign of Ahaziah, the successor of Ahab, and Joram, Ahaziah's successor, was subsequently driven out of Jahaz. It was at this moment of national victory that Mesha erected the monument recording his success. Then, however, the tide of fortune turned, Joram summoned his allies from Judah and Edom, Moab was ravaged, and Mesha besieged in his capital of Kirkha. In his despair he sacrificed his eldest son; “and there was great indignation against Israel; and they departed from him and returned to their own land.”

The chief interest attaching to the inscription in our eyes lies perhaps in the language and characters in which it is written. The language is almost exactly the same as that of the Old Testament, and shows that the dialect of Moab differed much less from Hebrew than does one English dialect from another. The very phrases recur which the Old Testament has made familiar to us, and at times we might fancy that we were listening to a chapter of the Bible. The characters, too, in which the text is written belong to a form of the Phœnician alphabet which must have resembled very closely that used by the Jews. We may thus see in them the mode of writing employed by the earlier prophets, and correct by their means the corrupt readings which the carelessness of copyists has allowed to creep into the sacred text.

Since the discovery of the Moabite Stone, another early inscription has been found in Jerusalem itself, which shows us precisely how the books of the Old Testament, which were composed between the time of David and the Babylonian Captivity, must have been originally written. This is the Siloam inscription, engraved in the rock-cut tunnel which conveys the water of the Virgin's Spring—the only natural spring in or about Jerusalem—to the Pool of Siloam. Its

strange position in a dark underground conduit, through which the water was perpetually flowing, caused it to remain unnoticed until three or four years ago. Even after the discovery the water had to be lowered, and the calcareous deposit with which the characters were filled to be removed, before the inscription could be satisfactorily read. It runs as follows:

“(Behold) the excavation! Now this is the history of the excavation. While the excavators were still lifting up the pick, each towards his neighbor, and while there were yet three cubits to (excavate, there was heard) the voice of one man calling to his neighbor, for there was an excess in the rock on the right hand (and on the left). And after that on the day of excavating the excavators had struck pick against pick, one against the other, the waters flowed from the spring to the pool for a distance of 1,200 cubits. And (part) of a cubit was the height of the rock over the head of the excavators.”

It will be observed that even at so early a period as that to which the inscription belongs the art of engineering was sufficiently advanced to allow the workmen of the Jewish king to commence tunnelling the hill simultaneously at its two opposite ends, and to calculate upon meeting in the middle. What makes the work the more

astonishing is that the distance from the mouth of the tunnel to its exit is 1,708 yards, and that the tunnel itself winds about a good deal. The exact date at which the work was executed is disputed, since while there are several reasons which would make us assign it to the age of Solomon, there are others which have led the majority of scholars to place it in the reign of Hezekiah. In this case it will be the conduit made by Hezekiah which is mentioned in 2 Kin. 20:20 and 2 Chron. 32:30. Now the forms of the letters used in the inscription make it quite clear that the engraver was accustomed to write on parchment or papyrus and not on stone. They are rounded, and not angular like the characters on the Moabite Stone. It is plain, therefore, that the alphabet employed in Judah was that of a people who were in the habit of writing and reading *books*. Another noticeable peculiarity about the inscription is that it is not a public document; even the name of the reigning king is not mentioned. It must have been engraved by one of the workmen in his delight at the successful completion of the work. The careful way in which the letters are formed, and the labor involved in cutting them in a place where they were never likely to be seen, prove that writing was as familiar to him as tunnelling the rock. The conclu-





sion from this fact is obvious; if an ordinary workman was thus familiar with the art of writing, the professional scribes and priests and members of the prophetic schools must have been much more so. There is no reason for thinking that the art was not as much known and practised as it is in our own day.

This conclusion is confirmed by the monuments of Egypt and Assyria. Books were common in Egypt from the very earliest times; the profession of the scribe was held in high honor; and both public and private monuments were covered with characters which it was presumed could be read by every one. Among the fragments of ancient Egyptian literature that have come down to us is a collection of letters, intended to serve as a model for this particular kind of composition. The great library of Nineveh has already been alluded to. This was formed in imitation of the libraries that had existed in all the Babylonian cities from a most remote period. Long before the age of Abraham there were not only libraries well stocked with books on clay and papyrus, but there were numerous readers also. The libraries were public, and the extent to which their contents were increased by the addition of new works and the multiplication of copies of old ones shows how well frequented they



were. The books were arranged and catalogued as in a modern library, and they treated of every department of knowledge and represented every class of literature which was known at the time. If the Israelites had been illiterate, living midway, as they did, between Assyria and Egypt, and bordering on the highly-civilized cities of Phœnicia, it would have been nothing short of a miracle. That they were not so has now been put beyond the reach of cavil by the discovery of the Siloam inscription. It bears out the testimony afforded by a passage in Proverbs (25:1), where it is said that Hezekiah's scribes made a new edition of the proverbs of Solomon, doubtless for a library similar to those of Assyria and Babylon.

The recovery of the ancient civilizations of the East during the last half-century has thus made it clear (1) that the narratives of the Old Testament, wherever they can be tested by confessedly contemporaneous documents, are accurate even to the most minute details; (2) that the Jews before the exile were a literary people, possessing at least one library, and well acquainted with the art of writing. Consequently, no arguments can be drawn against the credibility of the Old Testament Scriptures on the ground that their historical statements are false or mythical, or that they

could not have been written at the early date to which they lay claim. There is no reason why Abraham himself should not have been able to write; his contemporaries in Ur of the Chaldees could most of them do so; there is still less reason why his descendants who had been brought into contact with the literature of Egypt should not have written too. If the Biblical books were composed at the time to which the events described in them belong, the accounts they give of those events would have all the authority and weight of contemporary evidence. A writer does not give a false account of things which are well known to his readers, or imagine events which his contemporaries can show have never happened. We have seen that what we now know about the history of writing in the East not only makes it possible that the Biblical books were written at the time to which tradition assigns them, but also makes it probable that they were. It is not likely that the Israelites would have abstained from composing books when they were acquainted with the art of writing, and when the nations by whom they were surrounded had long been in the possession of libraries. And that the Biblical books actually belong to the time to which tradition assigns them is evidenced by the confirmation their contents have received from

the decipherment of the Egyptian and Assyrian monuments. The accuracy they display in small points is only explicable, as we have seen, on the hypothesis that the histories contained in them were related by contemporaries.

The Old Testament is the preparation for the New. The divine authority of the one is intimately bound up with that of the other. The history of the Jewish Church finds its explanation only in the advent of Christ; the message delivered by the prophets cannot be understood except in the light of the gospel. If the history is a medley of myths and legends, where are the foundations upon which Christianity was to build? If the prophecies were the composition of a later age than that to which they profess to refer, what becomes of the testimony to which our Lord himself appealed? Happily we are not called upon to answer these questions; the long-buried stones have been disinterred to cry out against the assailants of our faith, the long-forgotten empires of the ancient East have arisen out of the grave of centuries to testify to the truth of "the oracles of God."

It will be seen that the argument of this tract has so far been a *positive* one. We have endeavored to show by the aid of contemporaneous monuments that the Jews and their neighbors were

not the barbarous and illiterate people objectors to the truth of the Biblical narrative have tacitly assumed them to be, and we have further pointed out the agreement between the Biblical narrative and these contemporaneous monuments wherever they come into contact with one another. But the argument would not be complete unless we add to it a *negative* one. We have to show that the statements contained in books later in date than the events which they profess to record are not only inconsistent with the evidence of the monuments, but are frequently contradicted by it. Books like those of Tobit and Judith, on the one hand, or the history of the ancient East preserved in classical writers, on the other hand, will not bear the test of an appeal to the native inscriptions. Their statements are frequently irreconcilable with the facts obtained by modern Egyptian and Assyrian research, and they betray their late origin in various small inaccuracies.

Let us take, for example, the book of Tobit. Tobit is said to have been carried captive to Nineveh, along with his brethren of the tribe of Naphtali, by the Assyrian king Enemessar, whose son and successor was Sennacherib. But Naphtali, as we have seen, was really carried into captivity by Tiglath-pileser, who was in no way related to Sennacherib, and between whom and

Sennacherib there was an interval of two reigns and twenty-two years. Enemessar is evidently intended for Shalmaneser, the Assyrian Sallimannu-esir—"Solomon (i. e., the god of peace) directs." Shalmaneser, however, did not even belong to the same family as Sennacherib. Sennacherib's father was Sargon, who had seized the throne on the death or murder of Shalmaneser. But the author of the book of Tobit knew nothing of Sargon. A misinterpretation of the passage in the book of Kings relating to the fall of Samaria had led him to imagine that it had been captured by Shalmaneser; and as Sennacherib was the next king of Assyria whose name appeared in the historical books of the Old Testament, he jumped to the conclusion that Shalmaneser had been his father and immediate predecessor.

Tobit is further made to assert that Sennacherib's murder took place only fifty-five days after his return from his disastrous campaign in Palestine. Here again the author of the apocryphal book has misinterpreted the Old Testament record, and has accordingly been led into a grave historical error. The campaign in Palestine occurred in B. C. 701, and Sennacherib's death in B. C. 681, so that there was really an interval of twenty years between the two events. During this interval Sennacherib engaged in several



wars, though he did not again venture to attack Hezekiah, and we possess inscriptions of his in which he describes them.

The geography of Tobit is as irreconcilable with the monumental evidence as is the history. Rages, the city of Media which Tobit is said to have visited, probably had no existence in the time of Sennacherib. At any rate, it was unknown to the Assyrians, and consequently could not have been one of the Median cities in which the Israelitish captives were settled by the Assyrian king. The same was also the case with Ecbatana. No mention is made of it in the Assyrian inscriptions before the fall of Nineveh; and since the district in which it was situated was overrun by Sargon, it would seem that it was founded subsequently to his reign. At all events, in the age of Sargon and Sennacherib, the district of which it was afterwards the capital did not form part of Media at all. It was called Ellip, the Medes living to the north and the east of it. Like Rages, therefore, it could not have received an Israelitish population from the Assyrians. The anachronism is only equalled by the historical anachronism in the last verse of the book, where it is stated that Nineveh was overthrown by Nebuchadnezzar and Assuerus. The real destroyers of Nineveh were Cyaxares, the Median monarch,



and Nabopolassar, the father of Nebuchadnezzar. Assuerus is the Hebrew form of Xerxes, and Xerxes was a Persian prince, who did not reign until a century and a half after the fall of the Assyrian Empire.

If we pass from the book of Tobit to the book of Judith, and test its statements by the monuments, we shall find them equally false. It begins by alleging that Nebuchadnezzar ruled in Nineveh, and Arphaxad "reigned over the Medes in Ecbatana." But Nineveh had become a "ruinous heap" before Nebuchadnezzar had begun to rule anywhere; and he ruled, not over Assyria, but over Babylon. The contemporary king who reigned in Ecbatana was Cyaxares. Arphaxad is taken from the genealogy of Shem in Genesis 10, and is a name compounded with the word Chessed, or "Chaldæan." It need hardly be added that the Chaldæan and Median languages were widely different from each other, and that consequently a Median prince was not likely to bear a name which contained the Babylonian form of the word "Chaldæan."

The wars carried on by Nebuchadnezzar, as described in the book of Judith, are mere fictions of the imagination. His conquest of Ecbatana, and capture of its ruler, had as little foundation in fact as the assertion that he returned to "Nin-

evah" after doing so. The eighteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign, in which his army is said to have overrun Syria and Palestine and to have threatened Jerusalem, was two years after the destruction of the Jewish capital and the murder of Gedaliah. The name of the general who is supposed to have commanded the expedition, Holofernes, is Persian, and not Babylonian; and the geographical details of the campaign only prove the ignorance of the writer. Cilicia is stated to be little more than three days' journey distant from Nineveh, Mesopotamia is placed on the western instead of on the eastern side of the Euphrates, and the nations of Phut, Lud, and Rosh, together with the children of Ishmael, are all grouped together in the neighborhood of Assyria. It is scarcely necessary to observe that Lud or Lydia lay in the extreme west of Asia Minor, that Phut or Punt was the Somali coast of East Africa, that Rosh is a misinterpretation of Ezekiel 38 : 2, where the Hebrew word is rightly rendered, "chief" in the Authorized Version, and that the descendants of Ishmael inhabited the deserts of Northern and Central Arabia. Similarly "Joachim, the high priest which was in those days in Jerusalem," really lived in the time of the Persian king Darius, a century after the age of Nebuchadnezzar; and the very existence

of Bethulia, the supposed city of Judith, is a matter of doubt. The book of Judith, in fact, is a tissue of historical and geographical confusions and impossibilities; in almost every particular it is contradicted by the testimony of the ancient monuments.

Let us now turn to the classical writers who have left accounts of the ancient history of the East. Among these Herodotus and Ctesias of Cnidus naturally claim our first attention. Herodotus has been termed the Father of History, since the later classical conceptions of Oriental history were in great measure based upon his work. Ctesias was the physician of the Persian king, Artaxerxes, and thus had access to the State archives of Persia; on the strength of these he maintained that Herodotus had "lied," and he wrote a work with the object of contradicting most of the older historian's statements. But when confronted with contemporaneous monuments Herodotus and Ctesias alike turn out to be false guides. In Egypt, Herodotus placed the pyramid-builders after the time of Rameses or Sesostris, and but shortly before the age of the Ethiopians Sabaco and Tirhakah, although in reality they preceded them by centuries. Among the Egyptian kings a Greek demi-god, and Lake Mœris in the Fayûm, are made to figure, and the work of Herodotus abounds

with small inaccuracies in the explanations of Egyptian words and customs and in the description of the products of the country. His account of Assyria and Babylonia is still more misleading. The Assyrian and Babylonian Empires are confounded together, just as they are in the book of Judith; Sennacherib is called king of the Arabians, and Nebuchadnezzar is transformed into Labynêtos I. (or Nabonnidus), and made the father of the real Nabonnidus. The fortifications of Babylonia are ascribed to a Queen Nitôcris, who bears an Egyptian name, and is placed five generations after Semiramis, a title of the Babylonian goddess Istar or Ashtoreth; while Ninus, that is Nineveh, is supposed to be an Assyrian monarch, and termed the son of Belus or Baal.

In the fragments of Ctesias, Assyrian history fares no better. Here, too, we find Belus, Ninus, and Semiramis, registered among the Assyrian monarchs, along with Zames or Samas, the Sun-god, and Arios or Nergal. The fall of the Assyrian Empire is placed two centuries too early, and its last king (Sardanapalus,) is imagined to have burnt himself in his palace, to save himself from falling into the hands of his enemies. As a matter of fact, Sardanapalus is the Assur-banipal of the inscriptions, who probably appears in Ezra 4:10 under the Persianized form of Asnap-

per, and who was the son and successor of Esarhaddon. He was not the last king of Assyria; and the legend of his burning himself to death seems to have originated in the punishment of death by fire which he inflicted on his brother, the viceroy of Babylonia, after an unsuccessful rebellion. Equally apocryphal is the statement that the overthrow of Nineveh was brought about by Arbaces the Mede and Belesus the Babylonian. As has already been observed, Cyaxares and Nabopolassar were the princes whose armies brought the doom threatened by Nahum upon the great oppressing city of Western Asia.

Further examples are not needed to prove how quickly the true history of the ancient East was forgotten, and how hopelessly irreconcilable with the evidence of the monuments are the legends which were substituted for it in the pages of later writers. Where the accounts are not contemporaneous with the events, or derived from contemporaneous sources, we now know that they are untrustworthy, and to a large extent fictitious. The contemporaneous sources are of course those very monuments which the industry and research of modern scholars have brought to light and interpreted. They were, however, speaking generally, inaccessible to those who, like the Jews and Greeks, did not belong to the nations that



produced them. The languages and complicated systems of writing of Egypt and Babylonia were not likely to be studied by foreigners, and strangers were seldom allowed to examine the royal archives of the two countries. Indeed, in the case of Assyria it was impossible to do so; the great library of Nineveh lay buried under the ruins of the city, from which it has been disinterred during the lifetime of the present generation.

Jewish writers, therefore, who lived after the fall of the Assyrian and Babylonian Empires, or in the days of Persian and Greek supremacy in Egypt, had little chance of consulting the contemporaneous monuments of an earlier period. Their information had to be obtained from the scanty and often misunderstood notices of Assyrian and Egyptian history in the books of the Old Testament, eked out by their own imagination and the fictions current in the works of Greek authors. Hence it is that apocryphal books, like those of Tobit and Judith, are so full of errors and anachronisms, and thus show plainly the lateness of their composition and the unhistorical character of their contents.

What a contrast this is to the accuracy which, as we have seen, pervades the canonical books of the Old Testament Scriptures! While, on the



one side, the progress of modern discovery has tended to destroy the credit once attached to the works of Alexandrine Jews or Greek compilers, it has, on the other side, confirmed and verified, illustrated and explained, the statements and allusions in the historical and prophetical books of Holy Writ. The one are shown to belong to a later age than that of which they profess to give an account, the other to be contemporaneous with the events which they record. We may turn to them with increased confidence and faith; confidence in the historical picture they set before our eyes, and faith in the divine message which they were commissioned to deliver.

To sum up. The witness of ancient monuments to the Old Testament Scriptures is of a twofold nature. It is positive, inasmuch as it proves that they are in agreement with actual facts; and negative, inasmuch as it shows how far this is from being the case with documents which lay claim to the same amount of credibility and deal with the same subject-matter, but which really belong to a later age. The witness is therefore complete. Difficulties, no doubt, may still exist here and there, since as long as our knowledge is imperfect there are things which cannot be satisfactorily explained; but difficulties enough have been already cleared away, confir-

mations sufficient of the truth of the Biblical record have been produced, to banish such doubts as may have found place in our minds, and to inspire us with a calm confidence that with the increase of knowledge and the discovery of fresh monuments the difficulties which still remain will be diminished and the great body of verifying facts continually enlarged. The critical objections to the truth of the Old Testament once drawn from the armory of Greek and Latin writers can never be urged again; they have been met and overthrown once for all. The answers to them have come from papyrus and clay and stone; from the tombs of Ancient Egypt, from the mounds of Babylonia, and from the ruined palaces of the Assyrian kings.

THE  
VITALITY OF THE BIBLE.

BY  
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## ARGUMENT OF THE TRACT.

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SOME facts are adduced to show the falsity of Voltaire's prophecy that in a hundred years the Bible would be a forgotten book, and how utterly he and others failed to apprehend its wonderful vitality. In inquiring into this vitality the origin and history of the book are first examined, with a view to bring out that a volume of such manifold authorship could have no unity or coherence had its composition not been guided by a divine power. The next inquiry is, What does the Bible *say*—what is the principle of unity in its contents? In answer to this, the view dwelt on is, that from first to last the Bible reveals God drawing near to sinful man in the way of grace, and encourages him to hope in His mercy. It is further shown that this mercy comes through a Mediator, and the plan and work of Christ in Scripture are shown to be one of the great means of its influence. Next it is inquired what the Bible *does*? The effects on individuals and society are touched on. But are there not difficulties that interfere with the conclusion that the Bible is from God? There are difficulties, but they do not weaken this conclusion. Is, then, the great power of the Bible simply in the book as a book? It has power as a book, but its great power is derived from its being used as the medium by which the Holy Spirit works. To recognize this gives confidence and strength; to forget it plunges into error and weakness. Finally, reference is made to some other elements of the vitality of the Bible, and in the end to its remarkable hopefulness, especially with a view to the winding up of the church's history.

# THE VITALITY OF THE BIBLE.

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EIGHTEEN hundred years ago the apostle Peter spoke of "the Word of God which liveth and abideth for ever." Seventeen hundred years passed away, and the book which we call "the Word of God" still retained the vitality of which the apostle spoke. About that time the cleverest man in Europe determined to strip it of its ancient character. Voltaire boasted that it had taken twelve men to set up Christianity, but he would show that a single man was enough to overthrow it. He ventured too on a prophecy. He said that in a hundred years the Bible would be a forgotten book. About the time when we now write it should have been laid up in the collections of antiquarians, and taken from its musty shelf only as we take Chinese or Indian idols to show our Sunday-school children the absurdities of superstition. Which of the two prophecies is

it that stands fulfilled to-day—the simple-minded apostle's or the brilliant Frenchman's?

Let us answer by reference to a single scene. About the time when the Bible should have become a forgotten book two companies of distinguished scholars were holding frequent meetings in the chief city of the world, and often spending hours in considering the best rendering of a Greek or a Hebrew phrase. For years upon years they were giving many of their best days to such work, straining their faculties to their utmost, exchanging views, weighing arguments, praying for light, hesitating, reconsidering, delaying, resuming, and finally deciding on the points that gave them so much anxiety. What was it all about? About the book which Voltaire had said would be forgotten in a century. They felt it of infinite moment that every word of that book should have the most exact rendering in English that the resources of our language could afford. They were overwhelmed at the thought of the consequences of error or failure in the task they had undertaken. In this attitude of laborious carefulness they were sustained by the cordial approval of the whole community. And when a portion of their labors was finished, the swiftest engines that skill could frame were kept at work day and night multiplying copies of what, after



all, was but a revision of a former translation. The demand for the work was so great that about two million copies were absorbed in Great Britain alone.

The Bible is a unique phenomenon. It holds and has held in this world a place never equalled, never even approached, by any other book. Its position cannot reasonably be ascribed to artificial causes. Under peculiar circumstances, indeed, certain books may have a popularity utterly beyond their intrinsic worth. Their authors may have obtained distinction in other fields. Persons of great influence may take a fancy to them and create a demand for them, or their sale may be bolstered up by those who have a money interest in their success. But the popularity of such books is but the wonder of a day. No book can retain permanent power and popularity through artificial causes. It is silliness to speak of the Bible as the mere offspring of superstition, maintained in its place from age to age through the mere force of tradition—the dead weight of conservatism. A book that for eighteen centuries has run the gauntlet of every variety both of rude assault and of subtle criticism; a book that has thrown its pages open to every eye, that has challenged the reverence of the highest, and defied the scorn of the proudest; a book that has not hesitated to

assert its claim as the record of God's revelation for man's redemption and the expression of what God requires of man on pain of everlasting death—such a book, retaining its high place for eighteen centuries, cannot but possess intrinsic qualities of the highest order. It is undeniable that it has an extraordinary vitality. It never becomes antiquated, never survives its usefulness, never acquires a decrepit look: "Time writes no wrinkles on its brow;" it flourishes in the vigor of immortal youth. In the spirit of Voltaire, infidels may boast that ere long its day will be over; they may foretell that the time is coming when Bible beliefs and Bible worship will have been laid aside by the people of this country as thoroughly as the worship of Jupiter and Apollo by the old pagans, and the rites of Druidism by our distant ancestors, have been abandoned. But even on the ordinary principles of human nature these prophecies are worthless. The vitality that has survived eighteen centuries must be vitality of no common type. There may be ups and downs in the history of the Bible: Amalek may prevail to-day, and Israel to-morrow; the tide is subject to ebbs and flows; but Christians may rest in full assurance of one thing, that when the end of all comes the Bible will be found on no lower level than it occupies to-day: new proof will be given

of its unexampled quality as “the Word of God that liveth and abideth for ever.”

Our purpose in this tract is to inquire into the nature and causes of this remarkable phenomenon. The simple fact that the Bible has possessed such vitality is in itself striking; but the more the subject is investigated in all its relations and circumstances, the more remarkable will it appear, and the more conclusive will be the proof that “the Word of God liveth and abideth for ever.”

## I.

In the first place, let us turn our attention to the past and consider the origin and structure of the Bible. What is this book—commonly called *par excellence*, “the Book”—the Bible? What is its past history? How did it come into existence? And what has been its fortune in the world during the time that it has existed here?

Nothing can be more striking than its external history. Without going into any disputed question, we may say that in the history of books the Bible stands unexampled for the time over which its composition extended and the variety and number of its authors. It is not a single book, but a collection of sixty-six books, longer or shorter. These were not written at one time, but

during a period of fifteen or sixteen hundred years—not very much less than the duration of the Christian era. They were not written by members of any single caste or class; not, like the sacred books of the Egyptians, for example, by members of the priestly caste, living by themselves, understanding each other's plans and projects, and handing down from age to age the traditions that gave unity to their policy. They were written by all sorts of persons and in all sorts of places; by prophets, priests, kings, governors, prime ministers, herdmen, fishermen, publicans, physicians, pharisees. They were written in different languages, most in Hebrew, many in Greek, and a few portions in Chaldee. Some of the books are in the form of history, some of biography; some are poems, songs, visions, allegories; some are didactic treatises, some are familiar letters, some theological treatises, and some prophetic forecasts. In the desert of Sinai and the wilderness of Judæa; in the cave of Adullam, in the public prison of Rome, and in the island of Patmos; in the palaces of Mount Zion and Shushan; by the rivers of Babylon, with harps hanging on the willows, and on the banks of the Chebar, under shadow of the great fortress of Carchemish; in the streets of Jerusalem, built up again from its ruins, and amid the music of boys and

girls playing in the streets thereof—in such a vast variety of places and circumstances were the various bits of this strange mosaic constructed. No other literary phenomenon in all the world can be compared to this.

Yet the sixty-six pieces do form one book; the mosaic is a connected whole. But how was the connection secured? If we should conceive that in England, from the fourth century to the nineteenth, sixty-six pieces of writing had been prepared by about half that number of men, by kings, priests, scholars, peasants, fishermen, and the like, having no special connection with each other, can it be supposed that they would now form a homogeneous whole, a volume that might be bound together, and that we could read right on in our closets, in our families, and in our churches, without any sense of abrupt transition or of positive contradiction? Yet this has been the history of the Bible. Must not an unseen Power have moved so various a band of writers?

And, what is still more remarkable, the authors of the Bible, though so diverse as we have seen, were all connected with one small country, and were much bound up in it and in the people that dwelt in it; their thoughts gathered round its history, and their writings are crowded with allusions to its hills and valleys, its streams and lakes



and little brooks, its towns and villages—even its individual trees, rocks, caves, and gardens. In a sense it is a very local book, provincial, nay, parochial in its details; yet it has been accepted and adopted by all civilized nations; it is our book in this land as much as it ever was the Jews' book in Palestine; by some marvellous process of adaptation it has become by far the most catholic book in the world.

Let us dwell for a moment on this world-wide repute which the book has attained. Though eighteen hundred years have elapsed since the last parts of it were written, it is revered to-day as profoundly as it ever was in Judæa, and it is found as useful for practical purposes as it was by those who first listened to its message. It has been welcomed and honored by Jew and Greek, barbarian, Scythian, bond and free. It has been translated into some two hundred languages of the globe. Great societies exist for the sole purpose of multiplying versions and copies, which are produced in millions year after year. In most cases the translation of the Bible has been an era in the history of the language into which it has been rendered, fixing its grammar, enlarging its scope, and refining its quality. In the more civilized countries where it is received it is not enough to have a single version of it; scholar after scholar



tries to improve the rendering, and, as we have said, companies of revisers sit and labor for years in the endeavor to give a more exact meaning of the original phrase. Other scholars, like Tischendorf, wander hither and thither, rummaging among the driest parchments, the most time-worn fragments of ancient writings; and if they chance to discover some very old and musty manuscript of a part of the Bible, words cannot tell their delight, nor can figures express the value of the discovery. If, by some rare concurrence of circumstances, there should be discovered the original manuscript of any book of the Bible, it would be welcomed like a treasure direct from heaven—it would be by far the most sacred possession that earth contains.

Of the sixty-six books there is hardly one on which commentaries have not been written that would fill a library. Were we to set about computing all the literature that has sprung from the Bible, we should be more baffled than in trying to count the stars of heaven. Were we to glance at the history of art, to try to reckon all the paintings of the first quality that have been founded on Bible scenes, or the music that has been inspired by Bible truths, or the poetry that has owed its soul to Bible influence, or the civilizations it has moulded, or the legislations it has

controlled, or the institutions it has created, we should hardly be less perplexed.

And what a power the Bible is in individual and family life! Usually it is the first book a child is taught to know; it is the last on the pillow of the dying. The young man beginning life reads it to arm himself against temptation; the old man ending life reads it to comfort himself under sorrow, to stave off the desolation of bereavement, and to create anew that charm of hope which keeps the heart young when all else is old.

Can all this be the result of sheer superstition and misguided imagination? Have so many generations of men been the dupes of one gigantic fraud, dancing after a will-o'-the-wisp, imagining that they had found a treasure, in reality as baseless as any child's dream of fairyland? Is there not something more than remarkable, something quite unexampled, in the past history of this book? Such a history and such an influence, must it not possess a far more than human vitality; must it not really be "the Word of God that liveth and abideth for ever"?

## II.

From its past history let us proceed to examine the book itself, to search out its contents and

investigate its distinctive character. What is the great burden of its message? What constitutes its vital unity, giving a common character to Genesis and revelation, to Joshua and the Acts, to Chronicles and Corinthians, to Isaiah and Paul? The answer to these questions opens a wide door, and to be given fully would need a treatise. And yet there is one short answer to them, one that is well adapted to throw light on our present inquiry into the vitality of the book. If we were asked to say in a single word, What is the great burden of the Bible message to man? What is the aspect of God's character, or his attitude towards man, that dominates the whole Bible? our reply would be: "GOD DRAWING NEAR TO MAN IN THE WAY OF GRACE, AND ENCOURAGING HIM TO HOPE IN HIS MERCY THROUGH A MEDIATOR.

To illustrate this, let us take the first scene after the fall in Paradise. "The Lord God called unto Adam and said, Where art thou?" Gen. 3:9. This may be regarded as the germ of the whole Bible. Man has fallen, and, afraid of God, has hid himself; but God comes to look for him, and hold out the hope of mercy to him after all. In this passage we have God *seeking after guilty, ruined man*. He might have left him to his fate, but he does not. He comes down to the garden which man has desecrated by sin, and he calls to

him, trembling in his hiding-place. No doubt he pronounces on Adam the sentence of the criminal, and he drives him out of Paradise. But this is not all. A door of hope is opened in the sentence inflicted on the tempter: "The seed of the woman shall bruise thy head." Man is not to be abandoned to this enemy; deliverance is to come to him through his own seed. We shall speak afterwards of this promise; meanwhile what we dwell on is the fact that after he has fallen God approaches him, no doubt with a word of judgment, but also with a word of cheer and hope. This, we say, is the essence of the whole Bible.

From Genesis to Revelation we find the same thing—God looking down on man while struggling in the billows of sin and guilt, and stretching out His hand to save him. From first to last the Shepherd goes among the mountains to seek for the sheep that was lost. One of the wonderful felicities of the three parables of our Lord—the lost sheep, the lost piece of silver, and the lost son—was that they at once summed up the whole history of the past, indicated the great transaction of the present, and foretold the history of the future. They brought into a focus the whole story of God's dealings with man. In another sense these dealings were brought to a

focus in the cross of Christ. Jesus was the subject of his own parables. The history of the past, and particularly the history of Israel, showed that God had never abandoned man—that he had gone after him, through all his wanderings and all his wickedness, in order to recover him and lead him back to the true fountain of living waters. The incarnation and the crucifixion showed the climax of the divine solicitude for the restoration of man. Not only did God dwell among men in the person of his Son, not only did he become one with the race, but he bore the penalty of their transgression, in order that he might save them. “God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.” The greatest event in Bible history is just the summing up of all that preceded it. The Good Shepherd who had all along been following the sheep came nearer to them than ever, and suffered in their room that their sins might be forgiven, and that they might be led to the green pastures and still waters of eternal life.

Let us glance along the Old Testament history, and see whether this was not God’s attitude from the beginning. We have seen that when he sent man out of Paradise he did not leave him to fall constantly more and more under the power of his enemy till he should be hopelessly ruined, but



gave him a door of hope, gave him reason to trust in his mercy. Notwithstanding all God did, however, corruption increased among men; they came to the very verge of extinction, the water of the flood seemed to threaten universal death; but God drew near to Noah in the way of grace, and encouraged him, as he had encouraged Adam, to hope in his mercy. Again, however, after the flood, the process of corruption set in; idolatry became rampant, even in the plains of Mesopotamia; but God again interposed in the way of grace, rescued Abraham from the idolatry of his brethren, and made a covenant with him, promising that in him and in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed. The covenant was renewed to the patriarchs, and under its protection the family of Israel went to sojourn in Egypt. But the trouble now did not set in from within; persecution came from without: and again God drew near in the way of grace, delivering his people from Egypt, and giving them encouragement in ways without number to hope in his mercy. Ages rolled on; after they were settled in Canaan new revelations of the divine mercy were given; songs of redemption, calling on Israel to hope in the Lord, for with the Lord there was mercy and with him was plenteous redemption, became national songs for the people, and in their sacred



books revelations of the coming redemption became brighter and clearer. But if God was revealing himself more clearly, the force of corruption was working more intensely; chastisement followed, till the whole head was sick and the whole heart faint; the mighty Nebuchadnezzar dragged into captivity to Babylon nearly all who had been spared by the sword, pestilence, and famine.

But the same God who came to seek for Adam among the trees of the garden came to seek for Israel beside the rivers of Babylon. He drew near to them again in the way of grace, and invited them anew to hope in his mercy. He turned back the captivity of Zion and restored the holy city. Yet new forms of corruption came in like a flood, the heart and soul declined from God's service, and the foremost professors of religion became like whited sepulchres full of dead men's bones. Once more God drew nigh, and, as we have said, in a form unexampled and complete: God was manifest in the flesh, and proved the infinite riches of His grace by dying for men, the Just for the unjust, that he might bring them to God.

This was the final lesson. Nothing plainer, nothing higher, nothing fuller, could ever be shown. The cross was the climax of all the past, as it was the fountain-head of all the future.

After Christ, every member of his kingdom was charged in a measure to proclaim the grace of God and invite men to hope in his mercy. "Let him that heareth say, Come," was the rule of the kingdom; while men were set apart as ambassadors of the great King, to go into all the world and proclaim the good news to every creature, to proclaim God in Christ reconciling the world to himself, and not imputing unto men their trespasses, and to beseech them, in Christ's stead, to be reconciled to God.

This, we say, is the great feature of the whole Bible. If we read what may be called the "retrospective psalms"—those in which the poet rehearses the past history of the nation, we find them quite in this strain. In a long series of alternating clauses he contrasts the ever-returning backslidings of the people with the ever-enduring mercy of Jehovah. "Many times did he deliver them; but they provoked him with their counsel, and were brought low for their iniquity. Nevertheless he regarded their affliction when he heard their cry: and he remembered for them his covenant, and repented according to the multitude of his mercies." What fonder or more attractive attitude could God be seen in? Ever yearning after his foolish children; grieved for their folly and wickedness, and grieved for the misery that

they drew upon themselves; watching his opportunity to speak kindly and comfortably to them, and eager above all things to get a welcome from them when with plaintive voice he should make his appeal, "Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways, for why will ye die, O house of Israel?"

It was the remark of an eminent man that "in other religions we see man seeking after God; in the Bible we see God seeking after man." Is it not a most interesting and blessed feature? Surely our hearts may well cling to the book that shows the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, and whose name is holy, humbling himself to behold the earth, and drawing near in grace and mercy to save, to cleanse, and to bless. And well may we cling to that part of the book which is emphatically named "the Gospel"—the good news that not only tells us of grace abounding, but shows us God's eternal Son as the messenger of that grace; ay, and shows him pouring out his soul unto death, that the channel might be opened in which that grace should flow.

But how are we to account for this feature of the Bible? How comes it that from Genesis to Revelation we have such a disclosure of the divine heart, such a view of the divine Being bending over his erring children in order to arrest and save them? How did this conception of God come into

the hearts of the writers? And how did it come to be associated with the idea of a God most righteous and holy, in whose eyes evil cannot dwell and fools cannot stand?

Certainly it is not man's *natural* conception of God. It is not the conception furnished in any other religion or in any other so-called sacred book. How, then, came it into the heart of so many writers in succession, and how came they, at the last stage of development, to hit on the idea of the incarnation and the cross? The natural idea of man is that God is irritated; that he is not merely vexed at his sin, but that he feels bitter towards the sinner, and that he is eager to punish him. Even with the Bible in our hands it is often very difficult to uproot the feeling that God feels bitter towards us. The deeper our sense of sin, the more are we disposed to think that God has a personal aversion to us. We think that he must regard us as so many sources of annoyance and trouble, and we shrink from meeting him as we shrink from meeting any man of power and importance whom we know that we have injured and provoked.

Now, the question is, How came the writers of the Bible to have so different a conception of God? How came they at once to intensify God's righteousness, God's hatred of sin, and yet to strip

his feeling towards the sinner of all bitterness—nay, more, to bathe it, as it were, in love? How came they all, more or less, to have this feeling, so that, as we have seen, God is presented throughout as drawing near to the sinner in the way of grace, and encouraging him, unworthy though he is, to hope in his mercy? How came they to see what, outside the Bible, men have never been able to see with any clearness, mercy and truth met together, righteousness and peace embracing each other? And how came they to bring all these lines of teaching to a focus in the person, the life, the parables, the miracles, the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ? Is it not plain that behind and beneath the human authorship of the Bible it is pervaded throughout by an unseen influence from heaven? that it does not stand, like other books, on the mere gifts and attainments of its human authors, but was designed to be, what it ever has been and ever will be, the organ of the Holy Ghost for enlightening and saving men—"the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever."

But even the most cursory view of the great purport of the Bible would be essentially deficient if we did not take into account what it says of the particular way of mercy God has appointed for sinful men. For it is not the lesson of the Bible



that God's mercy comes to men directly and immediately; it comes by a channel of its own. It is not the teaching of the Bible that to forgive sin costs God nothing more than an act of forbearance and forgiveness costs *us* when we have sustained an injury. Mercy to the guilty comes from God through the mediation of another. There is always a third party in the transaction. To make our view more complete, therefore, of the chief feature of the Bible, we must add another clause—its object, as we have said, is to show God drawing near to man in the way of grace, and encouraging him to hope in his mercy—*but always THROUGH A MEDIATOR.*

It is not the doctrine of Scripture that through mere efforts of his own man is to reinstate himself in all that he has lost. Nor is it the doctrine of Scripture that by some general law of development and improvement things are to come round and all is to be well again. Nor, still further, is it the doctrine of Scripture that God is to restore all things in the same way in which in nature he restores the stripped tree or the trodden grass or the fever-stricken body. There was to be a special agent of restoration—a man, yet more than man, having the very attributes and properties of God. The serpent was to be crushed by the seed of the woman. All nations were to be blessed in Abra-



ham and his seed. Judah was to become somehow a praise among his brethren. A son of David was to reign from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth. One who is termed variously the Lord's Servant, the Lord's Messenger, the Lord's Angel, the Lord's Anointed, was to become the great Fountain of benediction. Whatever instalments of blessing might come earlier, the great ocean of blessing was to be revealed only when He should come to dwell with men.

Hence that feature of the Old Testament which attracts every eye—its prophetic Messianic strain, its wistful looking forward, its testimony to Him who was to come. No other book is marked by any such feature. Whatever knowledge of the future might be claimed under other religious systems, prophecy had no such place in any of them as it has in the Hebrew Scriptures. Pagan religions might claim to possess a certain knowledge of the future; the soothsayer might pretend to divine the course of things, or the mysterious voice from the shrine of Delphi might utter some forecast of a coming event. But in no ancient book or ancient religion do we find any parallel to that stream of Messianic prediction which runs through the whole Old Testament. Nowhere else is there such a looking forward to a definite event in the future that was to constitute the

turning-point in the world's history, or to the coming of One who, while a man, was to be much more than a man, who was to complete the economy of redemption and bring to perfection God's dispensation of grace.

The figure of this great Mediator of blessing is conspicuous through all Scripture. The Old Testament looks forward to him; in the Gospels he is present; while the Epistles look back on him, and at the same time present the hope of another advent, yet to be realized. In the Bible the history of the world thus acquires a unity which it never attains in any other way. Men of great intellect struggle hard to unravel the tangled web of human events, and to find amid all their diversities and vicissitudes something like a beginning, a middle, and an end. The problem that baffles the human intellect is solved with ease in the Bible. The first long and often dark chapters of history prepare the way for the coming of Christ, and after his advent history describes the progress of his kingdom, which is one day to be coextensive with the habitable earth. There is no doubt what constitutes the centre of things in Scripture. All eyes look in one direction, and find in the advent of Jesus the central fact in the world's history.

The prominence of Christ in the Bible, in the

Old Testament as well as the New, and the significance of his function as the divine agent of grace and blessing, the great Restorer and Redeemer, the Way and the Truth and the Life, go far to account for its vitality and vindicate its claims as the inspired Word of God. It comforts men to think of God as drawing near to them in an attitude of grace and mercy; but it more than comforts them, it satisfies them, to dwell on the thought of Christ, in whom divine grace was so gloriously revealed, not merely in the words he spoke, the promises he made, and the life of love and sympathy he led, but preëminently in the death he died—"the Just for the unjust, to bring them to God." Studying the revelation of the Father in the Son, they are not only assured that they have rightly understood the divine attitude as seen in the fainter light of the Old Testament, but they see the harmony of God's attributes in the whole transaction; the entire plan of grace reflects his high perfections, and glows with the lustre of heaven. So long as men who feel that they have wandered from God can appreciate the love that has followed them with outstretched arms and a father's yearning heart; and so long as they find this to be His attitude in every part of the Bible, and preëminently in those parts where either directly or symbolically Jesus Christ

is set forth as the channel of divine grace and blessing, the Bible cannot but retain its vitality, cannot but vindicate its character as the Word of God that liveth and abideth for ever. As explaining, too, in some measure, the history of the world, and showing the development of the divine plan for gathering together in Christ the shattered fragments of humanity, building up the ruined temple upon Christ as the chief cornerstone, and giving something of unity and dignity to the history of the world, it must be felt that the Bible has preëminent claims to the respect and the confidence of men.

No doubt it is denied by rationalists that Jesus Christ occupies in the whole Bible that place of preëminence which we have claimed for him. What are called the Messianic prophecies, it is maintained are not such really, but acquire that character by men reading into them what they find in the Gospels. The idea of a Messianic age, they say, so far as the Old Testament presents it, is merely the expression of that hope in a good time coming which is natural to the heart of man. It is natural for the oppressed to look forward to deliverance. It is natural for the sick to hope for health. In stormy weather it is natural to look for the return of calm and sunshine. The Messianic prophecies, so called, were just the

embodiment of these hopes cast in a more vivid form than the common. The Hebrew nation had more hopefulness than most, and these prophetic dreams of Paradise regained were simply the outcome of sanguine temperaments fashioning their fond imaginings of the future in forms of unusual beauty.

But were the Hebrews a particularly hopeful people? Hopefulness is not a usual characteristic of Eastern nations, which are remarkable for their tendency to live in the present and their comparative unconcern for the future. And as for the Hebrews, it cannot be said that as a nation it was their habit, under the pressure of present trouble, to dwell hopefully on a brighter future. Was it a hopeful spirit they showed after Moses and Aaron came to them from the burning bush and announced God's purpose of deliverance? Was it a hopeful spirit they showed when they remembered the leeks and the garlic and the onions, and their soul loathed the light bread of the desert? Did the cry, "Make us a captain, that we may return to Egypt," indicate a hopeful spirit? or the report of the ten spies after their return from searching out the land? Or was there much hopefulness shown, far on in their history, when, after the proclamation of Cyrus at Babylon, a mere fraction of the exiles availed themselves of the offer to



return to their land? Not only is there no ground to say that the Hebrews as a nation were remarkable for their hopefulness, but the opposite is nearer the truth. Where a spirit of hopefulness in the future did triumph over present trouble, it was on the part of a few, and as the result of faith in the word of God. It was faith in God's word that made Abraham hopeful—"who against hope believed in hope." It was this, too, that led Moses to believe in the coming deliverance of the people from Egypt, and to rouse them to suitable action. It was this that made the faithful spies despise the gigantic Anakim, and urge the people to go up and take possession of the land. It was this that inspired the bright visions of Isaiah of the glory of the latter day. The temper of the people leaned to despondency, and it was from the men that believed God and hoped in his word that the glorious visions of the future came. To account for the stream of Messianic prophecy in the Hebrew Scriptures by saying that the people had a hopeful temperament, would be like accounting for the recent reformation in the Fiji Islands by saying that the natives had a benevolent and peaceful turn. It would be to mistake the effect for the cause, and in both cases alike to overlook the special action of the Spirit of God.



The efforts of modern rationalism to put Christ out of the Old Testament are not more successful when attention is turned to particular passages for which a Messianic character is claimed. It is often said now that there are hardly any texts in the Old Testament that have a distinct reference to Christ. Even the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah is the subject of a vehement struggle, almost ludicrous from the variety of opinion as to who is the subject of the prophet's discourse. But if the Messianic references in the Old Testament are so few and far between, how comes it that that arch-rationalist, David Strauss, in trying to account for the rapidity with which belief in Christ's miracles grew up in the early church, laid so much stress on the Messianic predictions of the Old Testament? He maintained that in ordinary circumstances it would have taken far longer time for the mythical dream that Christ wrought miracles to establish itself as a fact in the popular mind, but that the process was greatly helped and quickened by the Old Testament predictions, which ascribed to the Messiah the performance of definite miracles. Since these miracles were ascribed to him in the Old Testament—since it was said that the ears of the deaf would be unstopped and the eyes of the blind would see, that the lame man would leap as a hart and the tongue of the dumb

would sing, his early followers, said Strauss, at once inferred that such things must have been done by him. Now, it were well for rationalism to hold to one position or another; it only exposes itself to contempt by maintaining at one time that the so-called Messianic prophecies amount to nothing, and at another time saying, with Strauss, that they were so clear, full, and explicit as to account for the early prevalence of the belief that numberless miracles were performed by Christ.

But besides all this, is it not certain that even in heathen nations there prevailed a belief, as Tacitus and Suetonius testify, that a great Deliverer was to come from Judæa—a belief that must have sprung from the Hebrew prophecies, spread over the world as they were through the Septuagint translation? Did not our Lord and his apostles refer often and openly to the prophetic parts of the Hebrew Scriptures as verifying his claims? Did not the Jews themselves, for long centuries after the birth of Christ, cling to the belief that their prophets foretold a personal Messiah, who should fulfil all their pictures of peace and prosperity? And were not the early Christians in the habit of referring triumphantly to the fulfilment in Christ of the prophetic announcements as an ample warrant of their faith in him? In view of such considerations, Christians in our time need

not be moved from the sure conviction that Jesus Christ is revealed to them in the Old Testament as well as in the New; that all through the Old Testament he is represented as the channel through whom God's grace was to flow to men, and that their visions, often so glorious, of abounding blessing and joy were due to the incomparable merit and infinite love of him in whom it had been promised to Abraham all the families of the earth were to be blessed.

Let us suppose now that before knowing anything of the Gospels we had fully gathered from the Old Testament these two ideas—that God had all along been drawing near to man in the way of grace, and that it was foretold that in the fulness of time there was to appear on earth that glorious Being through whom his grace was to be conveyed to men; with what a strange interest should we not now open the New Testament and devour its contents to ascertain what manner of person this great Deliverer actually was! We could not fail to have very high expectations of him; one that should embody the yearning love of the great Father longing for his children; one that should have power to atone for the children's guilt and to make it possible for their Father to receive them; one that should combine the sympathies of humanity with the glory of divinity; one that should

be able to win them back from all the vanities that had fascinated them and all the masters that had enslaved them, to infuse into them a heavenly temper and make them meet for a heavenly home—what an exalted, what a wonderful Being this must be! No mere child of Adam, however gifted and however good, could fulfil the conditions demanded of one who was to embody the love of the Father and to convey his grace to men.

But how far are any conceptions or expectations that we might have formed beforehand exceeded by the reality! When the time came for the manifestation of the Messiah there appeared One who stands without peer or parallel in the history of the world. A true brother of humanity, yet the Son of God; separate from sinners, yet the Friend of sinners; pure, spotless in his whole spirit and life, and breathing forth an influence that bore men up to the gate of heaven; diffusing on every side health and benediction, and at last laying down his life as a sacrifice for his people's sins; rising from the grave and ascending into heaven, yet ruling his church from the skies, and promising to come again to receive them to himself, that where he was there they might also be—this is he whom the evangelists present to us as the fulfilment of all the promises, as the divine

channel of grace and peace, the gift of God to the children of men!

With what unerring certainty and full assurance of faith the early disciples apprehended the glorious quality of this gift of God! Of all the tasks that rationalism has to grapple with, none is so utterly desperate as to account for the relation that sprang up between Jesus and his first disciples on the supposition that there was nothing supernatural in his person. For that relation was not merely the relation between scholar and teacher. It was not merely the relation between servant and Master, or between friend and friend. It was preëminently the relation between sinner and Saviour. They knew that he embodied the Father's love and that he was the channel of the Father's grace. They knew that he was the Good Shepherd who had come to the bleak, storm-tossed mountains to search for his lost sheep. They felt the tender touch, the fond embrace of the Shepherd, they heard his soothing voice, they were folded in his loving arms. No words could have been more charged with the love and grace of heaven than such words as his—"Be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee." "Verily I say unto thee, this day shalt thou be with me in paradise." To suffer for him was a privilege, to die for him the height of honor. They were



“persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other creature,” would be able to separate them from “the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

What the living Jesus was to those who lived in his days, the four Gospels and the other books of the New Testament convey in some measure to those who have lived in later times. Seen through such a medium, the glory is less dazzling and the impression less overwhelming: but on the other hand we have the benefit of being able to search, compare, and ponder the various records, to learn more by thus searching of the depths of the riches of the grace and love of Christ, to discover from time to time new themes for wonder, and new grounds for reverence, trust, and affection. The book whose open page brings us into this gracious presence, whence comes to us all that is fitted to quell our fears, soothe our sorrows, purify our hearts, and transform our lives, is surely not destined to be forgotten: while men live needing the grace and love of heaven, it must prove to be “the Word of God that liveth and abideth for ever.”

And further, when the light of the New Testament is thrown back on the Old, new beauties



are found in nearly every page. Glimpses are seen of Him who is by far the most glorious, as he is also by far the most precious, personage that sinners of mankind can have to do with. Nor is this the result of mere sentiment or fancy. If God inspired the prophets to write of Christ, even though it was often dimly and indefinitely, now that we know more of him we may trace his features, we may get glimpses of his face, in many an Old Testament page. And this is not a mere work of supererogation. We ought not to say that, inasmuch as the New Testament presents Christ manifest in the flesh, it is but wasting our time to look for him in the types and shadows of the old economy. The remark is shallow, and very untrue to our nature. When objects are dear to us, and much more living persons, we delight to find resemblances to them even in reflections and shadows. The clouds of the morning are beautiful, but not less interesting are the shadows they cast on the mountains, now swathing them in solemn, motionless folds, now scudding along their bosoms one after another, as the birds in playful glee chase each other in the air. It is delightful on the calm autumn evening to gaze on the stately crag, clothed and crowned with its feathery foliage, rising abrupt from the edge of the placid lake; is it less so to gaze on its

marvellous reflection beneath the surface, and see how not a twig or leaf wants its counterpart there?

“The swan on still St. Mary’s lake  
Floats double—swan and shadow.”

Who does not like to trace the faint resemblance of a beloved parent or child, whether in some dim ancestral portrait of a former generation, or in the youthful face of a living descendant? What man of science does not delight to find in the less perfect forms of animated nature analogies however faint to the more perfect? How can the poet better fulfil his vocation than when in the dim voices of nature he finds articulate echoes of the voice of God? Tell us not that when we find in the Old Testament the shadows of the New we are wasting our time and allowing our fancy to drag us whither it will. That there has been a great amount of fantastic spiritualizing of the Old Testament, from Origen even to Jonathan Edwards, cannot, we think, be disputed. But it is equally true that there has been a vast amount of failure in poetry—failure to bring out in song the real relations of God and nature, or of nature and man. Man’s blunders in reading nature’s record no more prove the record to be unworthy of study than the blunders of a child in reading “Paradise Lost” prove that

Milton was not a poet. It is beyond reasonable doubt that the Old Testament swarms with hints and glimpses, shadows and analogies, that are more fully brought to light in the New. It is equally beyond doubt that on this account it is full of profound and genuine interest to all who are concerned about the attitude of God to sinners, and the revelation of his grace; and it is certain that this feature will never cease to give vitality to the whole book, that it will ever tend to confirm and multiply the proof that it is "the Word of God that liveth and abideth for ever."

### III.

After considering what the Bible is, it is a natural question to ask what the Bible does. What is its effect? The spiritual experience of some men as to what they find in the Bible is not the experience of all men. It is desirable to find a more palpable test of the claims of the Book—something to prove more incontrovertibly that it is the Word of God, and thus possesses a vitality that can never be destroyed.

What, then, are the effects of the Bible? The question is not capable of a single answer because the effects of the Bible depend on how men receive it and apply it. Some even in Christian countries formally deny its authority; and some,

admitting its authority in words, pay little or no heed to it in their lives. In judging of the effects of the Bible, we must lay down a canon applicable to all cases of a professed remedy for any disorder. If the question be whether the remedy be an efficient one, an indispensable condition is that it be applied to the disorder in the proper way. If vaccination claims to be an antidote to smallpox, its effects can be judged of only from the cases of those who have been duly and properly vaccinated. If the practice of vaccination were merely general but not universal in a community, it would be unfair to proclaim it a failure because many cases of smallpox occurred. Applying this canon of common sense to the case of the Bible, it is plain that the true effects of the Bible can be judged of only from the cases of those who accept it as the Word of God and strive to conform in all things to its requirements. If these constitute but a fraction of a community; if the greater number adopt some other rule of life in whole or in part, it is no wonder if the result, as apparent in the character of the community, is unsatisfactory. In such a community the question is not fairly tested, although even there the indirect influence of the Bible may be seen in a higher tone and a purer life than could have been found where the Bible was wholly unknown.

Taking those, therefore, by whom the Bible has been cordially accepted, what has been the result? It has been found a light to them that sit in darkness and in the region and shadow of death, to guide their feet into the way of peace. It has brought to them the balm of Gilead and the Physician who is there. It has taught them songs of forgiveness and thanksgiving through the grace of Him who died for them and who rose again. It has given them a home and a Father, a character, a life, and a hope. It has made the drunkard sober, the scoffer devout, the miser generous, the timid brave, the selfish self-denying. It has furnished the young with noble plans of life and noble principles to guide them through it, and it has given them strength and decision to stand to their colors. It has furnished the afflicted with comfort in every sorrow, kept hope burning in the deepest gloom, and taught them to hurl defiance at the last enemy—"O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"

It has nerved men and women too with wonderful strength to do and to suffer. It has made poor, weak, quivering flesh equal to the tortures of the Inquisition, equal to the dreary dungeon and the stake and the gallows and the wheel and the red-hot pincers and the flaying knife, and I know not what other instruments of cruelty.



Grander still, it has inspired them with a marvellous love for their fellows, and with a fervent sympathy with Jesus in his grand enterprise to seek and to save the lost. It has turned the delicate lady into the laborious nurse who toils day and night to soothe the sorrows and heal the diseases of the sick; it has sent the accomplished scholar to the haunts of savages to try to win them to the blessed life, no matter though in return the tomahawk may shatter his skull or the poisoned arrow pierce his bosom. It has given power to the Christian explorer to bury himself for long and weary years among degraded tribes, and while dreaming sadly of his children far away, or dreaming of luxurious feasts during the gnawings of hunger, to work on resolutely by a fixed plan of persevering love in spite of pain and weariness and peril and opposition and disappointment and harrowing scenes that make him fancy he is living in hell.\*

But not to dwell on extraordinary cases, the effect of the Bible on individuals, and these numberless as the sand, is that through it they are brought into fellowship with God—God in Christ; they have been restored to their lost place in the great divine orbit, and have recovered that holy communion from which sin had driven them.

\* See Livingstone's Last Journals, II. 135.



Words cannot express what it is to have gained a God, and to be living in loving fellowship with him. To have God as a Father and a Friend, forgiving all our iniquities, healing all our diseases, guiding our perplexities, soothing our sorrows, and sanctifying our mercies, and to know that these are but the firstfruits, and that God will be the strength of our heart and our portion for evermore, is surely the most heavenly experience that man can have in this world. If the Bible in all ages has been the instrument of this experience, it may well be called "the Word of God that liveth and abideth for ever."

But beyond the effects of the Bible on the individual, let us glance at its effects on society wherever a sufficient number of persons have yielded themselves to it to give a tone to the whole community. It can hardly be denied that it has proved the most powerful agent of civilization the world has ever known. We have but to look at what takes place in Fiji or Madagascar or the New Hebrides or Lovedale or Livingstonia, when the Bible becomes a living power. Who is there who, if told that some community of cannibals had taken to the Bible, that they were listening in crowds to its message, that they were fervently singing its Psalms and hymns, and that their children had learned to revere the name of

Jesus, would not expect with the firmest assurance to hear next that they were abandoning their ferocious habits, building houses, clothing themselves with decent apparel, cultivating their fields, beginning to trade, enacting righteous laws, and observing the rules of truth and righteousness? And as the ages rolled on, should we not reckon with absolute certainty that among these nations, as in older countries, the Bible would continue to exert its influence and to elevate the community still further?

But if you should burn the Bible and abolish it for ever, what would be the prospects of the world as to order and real progress? What skeptic who thinks of the passions that lie in the human breast, of the fearful height to which these passions may rise, of the schemes of Nihilism and Socialism, of the societies for vengeance and assassination, of daggers and revolvers, nitro-glycerine and dynamite, and the readiness of reckless men for their nefarious ends to plunge society into chaos, could look forward without misgiving to a state of things in which neither Bible nor Saviour, law nor gospel, should have the slightest influence, or be so much as known? On the other hand, there is hardly a Christian man or woman whose hope for the world in future ages is not bound up with the fate of the Bible. His ground

would be the same, alike for despair if the Bible should perish, and for hope if the Bible should be sustained; inasmuch as all experience shows that its influence extends alike to the life that now is and to that which is to come. Even on this lower ground, as an instrument of temporal benefit, its vitality never fails; it is "the Word of God that liveth and abideth for ever."

#### IV.

But are there not difficulties in the Bible? Are there not passages which it is hard to reconcile with our highest ideas of the character of God? Is he not sometimes introduced as requiring things to be done which it is hard to believe that he could have done? Are not men and women sometimes commended for acts which we cannot read of without a shudder? Is there nothing in the Bible to hurt the sense of modesty, the instinct of purity? If it be the Word of God that liveth and abideth for ever, why should it contain a single statement or a single word fitted to raise a doubt whether it has really come from him?

Let us frankly admit that there are difficulties in the Bible. In fact, there are difficulties in connection with all God's works. There are difficulties in nature, raising doubts in some minds whether it is really the product of an infinitely

benevolent Creator. We have storms, volcanoes, earthquakes, poisonous winds, destructive floods, and deadly malaria. We have famine and pestilence, we have animals devouring each other, we have ferocious monsters of the deep and of the land, a terror to all who are near them. There are great difficulties in providence—in the moral government of God. Why did God permit sin to enter his world and spread desolation and misery on every side? Why are the wicked often so prosperous? why is the just man so often trodden down? why is the godly man so often persecuted? Why did not God protect his fair creation, natural and moral, from being invaded and desolated by such agencies of disorder and death? “My ways are not your ways, neither are your thoughts my thoughts, saith the Lord.” There are so many ways in which God follows a different course from what we should have expected that we cannot wonder that we find apparent anomalies in his Word. The wonder in fact would be if there were no such anomalies. An analogy runs through all God’s works; and that analogy would have failed us if we had met with difficulties in nature, difficulties, yes, tremendous difficulties, in providence, and no difficulties whatever in the Word.

Let us remember, too, that while the whole Bible is the record of God’s revelation, it is a rev-

elation made in a peculiar way. It was a *gradual* revelation, beginning dimly, and shining more and more unto the perfect day. It was an *educating* revelation, for the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; and the faculty of spiritual discernment had to be imparted and enlarged, had to be made gradually capable of more and more clear apprehension, not only to individuals, but to the race itself, from age to age. In the record of this revelation, moreover, in addition to the unchangeable divine truth which is its essence, we often find the reflection of man's imperfect apprehension of that truth, and imperfect moral and spiritual application of it. We find the unchangeable truth of God so often presented in immediate connection with man's imperfect apprehension of it that what really belongs to man may at times appear as if it belonged to God.

The difficulty in respect of such things would be much greater if it occurred in connection with the closing portions of the revelation. But the case is quite different. The moral difficulties of revelation are connected with the Old Testament, and chiefly with the earlier parts of the Old Testament, when the complications to which we have referred were in full force, and the difficulty of separating what is purely divine from man's way



of apprehending it is by far the greatest. With the closing portion of the book there is no such difficulty. A spiritual and moral level has been reached, the highest ever known or conceived by man. The character of Jesus Christ presents the most complete ideal of excellence that has ever been imagined. The moral tone of the Gospels and the Epistles is so pure as to constitute one of the chief arguments for the divinity of the Christian religion. In the earlier parts of the Bible we seem to see the sun struggling through clouds sometimes so dense as to hide him from our view. In the Gospels and the Epistles the clouds have scattered, the sun shines forth in all his splendor and in all his strength, and the earth, bright, warm, and fruitful, bears witness to his beneficent power.

Another consideration is of great practical weight in dealing with the moral difficulties of the Bible. In all cases where difficulties present themselves on one side of a question it is useful to ask whether on the other side the difficulties are not equal, perhaps even greater. We have allowed that there are difficulties in connection with the position that the Bible is the inspired Word of God. But we affirm with the utmost confidence that there are far greater difficulties in connection with the position that it is merely



the product of man. "The Bible," an old minister once remarked to his flock, "is a wonderful book, *if it be true.*" The surprise of his people at the qualification was quickly removed when he added, "but it is ten times more wonderful *if it be not true.*" To those who ponder the Bible in all its aspects—its far-distant commencement, its unexampled chain of authorship, its unity of purpose, ever showing God drawing near to man in the way of grace, its prophetic announcements of Christ, its glorious portrait of the great Mediator, its scheme of grace, its sanctifying efficacy—it is simply inconceivable that such a book should have been the product of mere human reason. Whoever ponders the main contents and features of the book and drinks in its great message feels that there is such a surpassing glory about it that any difficulties there may be in some parts of it do not affect him—these parts are, as it were, transfigured through their neighborhood to the rest. In a great chandelier of a thousand lights a few dark jets are nothing; they are swallowed up in the blaze. If the body be well clad on a winter day, the naked face suffers no inconvenience; it receives its heat from the protected body. We know that here we see through a glass, darkly, and are ignorant of much of the ways of God. All that the loyal heart needs is such evidence

that as a whole the Bible is the Word of God as to lead it to wait with patience for light on the difficulties it cannot resolve. There is such power, as it were, in the leading nerves and arteries that local numbness here and there makes no difference to the vitality of the whole frame.

## V.

But does the whole vitality that we have spoken of reside in the book itself? Is there a sort of charm in it, so that it cannot but influence men for good? If such were our doctrine we might justly be called bibliolaters—worshippers of a book. If one were to extol the wires along which the electric fluid runs as the source of all they convey, one would be laying one's self open to a charge of ignorance and folly. If, in like manner, we were to ascribe to the Bible as a book all its power over man's spirit, we should be laying ourselves open to a similar charge. No doubt the Bible, even as a book, has far more moral power than any other book. There is a measure of moral power in the maxims of Seneca, in the precepts of Confucius, and in the requirements of Buddha; so also there is moral power in the very contents of the Bible. But it is not our doctrine that it is here that the *great* strength of the Bible lies. We maintain, further, that the Bible is the

medium through which the Holy Ghost works in the soul of man, enlightening, renewing, and transforming it. In this point of view the Bible is like the electric wire, and its great power is derived from the fact that it is the channel of a divine agent. Being the product of the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the Bible from the first has been adapted to his use. It is when used by him that it becomes "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction and instruction in righteousness." It is called "the sword of the Spirit." As his weapon, his instrument, it does its greatest work. If we would know the Word in its highest efficacy, we must depend on the Spirit's power. There is all the difference between the Bible in itself and the Bible as the instrument of the Spirit that there was between the strength of Samson with his locks shorn and the same Samson before the scissors or razor came upon his head.

Neglecting this, we fall into fatal errors, and great evils result. The Word quickened by the Spirit is God's great power for the regeneration of the world. Through this agency the greatest strongholds fall, as did the walls of Jericho. Through the Word read and preached God has provided for the reclamation of the darkest moral wastes, for turning the wilderness into a fruitful field, and for giving the glory of Carmel and the

excellency of Sharon to regions cursed with spiritual death and desolation. Going forth with this weapon against giants, many a David has achieved victories that seemed unreasonable and impossible. Cannibal islands have come to resound with the melody of psalms and hymns and spiritual songs; idols have been cast to the bats and to the moles; before this Zerubbabel great mountains have become plains, and the walls of Jerusalem have been built up even in troublous times.

But it has often happened that men, anxious to do good, have failed to see how the Bible can exert more than its natural power as a book over the hearts and lives of men. Believing this to be insufficient for the great moral warfare that has to be waged, they have looked about them for more likely artillery—for ways of influencing the heart more apparently adapted to the end. One very common device has been to make great use of the senses in conveying spiritual truth. Such things as music, architecture, pictures, and religious rites that appeal to the senses, have been thought much more likely to attract the thoughtless and impress the careless than the contents of a serious book. But still it remains true, as in the days of the apostles, that men are born again through the Word of God that liveth

for ever, that the gospel of Jesus Christ is the power of God unto salvation, and that it has pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. Want of confidence in the divine method of "Word and Spirit" leads to devices that promise much but perform little. The more trust we repose in the Word as the channel and the Holy Spirit as the power, the more glorious are the results sure to follow. This holds true alike of our private reading of the Bible and of the use that is made of it in public. A Biblical Christian is the best furnished of all Christians, and a Biblical pulpit is the most powerful of all pulpits. But in either case the power of the Spirit is the energizing force that makes the Word effectual; and the words of the apostle are as applicable to this as to any other form of spiritual labor—"I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase."

## VI.

We have confined ourselves in this tract to the chief elements of the vitality of the Bible. We have dwelt on its chief element of unity—its view from first to last of God drawing near to men in the way of grace, encouraging them to hope in his mercy through a Mediator. We



have seen him carrying forward his scheme from age to age, till at last, in the end of the Apocalypse, the gulf, which opened between them at the beginning of Genesis, is completely bridged over, and a voice is heard proclaiming, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them and shall be their God."

It is hardly possible, in a closing sentence, even to glance at other elements of unity or other features of vitality in the Scriptures. We may simply notice how, all through, the two great elements of practical goodness—duty to God and duty to man—go hand and hand together; how the service of God constantly includes all moral duty, all faithfulness in the social relations of men, so that you never find religion viewed as a separate concern that may be duly attended to, even when other duties are neglected; how uniform is the view presented in Scripture of the awfulness of sin, its deadly virus, and its awful doom when the day of retribution comes at last; how constant is the encouragement to man to seek communion with God; what a lofty place prayer holds alike in the Old Testament and the New; and how beautiful the Bible pictures are of the intercourse of redeemed man with God,

whether seen in the converse of Moses on the Mount, or David in his Psalms, or the beloved disciple leaning on his Master's bosom!

Let us mention but one other feature—the *hopeful spirit* that pervades the whole Bible. The Old Testament was full of hope in the prospect of the first coming of Christ; the New Testament is full of hope in the prospect of the second. Admitting, while the Bible does, that earth is laboring under a frightful disorder, it looks forward with serene confidence to a time when all tokens of the disorder shall be removed. Not certainly wholly remedied, in the sense of all men being saved, for there is neither concealment nor ambiguity as to the fact that a portion of mankind will be lost. This is the solemn and mysterious truth which is never allowed in the Bible to pass from our view. But in other respects, the winding up of the world's history, or, rather, of the church's history, exemplifies the tendency of Scripture to carry on our minds to bright conclusions. We are encouraged to think much of God's power of bringing good out of evil. Our individual troubles have their solace; and on a large scale all things work together for our good. The power of the Bible to cheer the afflicted is one of its chiefest glories. It is the Bible only that can assure us that "our

light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding, even an eternal, weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal."

PRESENT STATE  
OF THE  
CHRISTIAN ARGUMENT  
FROM  
PROPHECY.

BY  
REV. PRINCIPAL CAIRNS, D.D., LL.D.

## ARGUMENT OF THE TRACT.

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THE conditions which must meet in any utterance or writing to warrant its being regarded as a prophecy are stated. While other great ends are served by prophetic teaching, the predictive element is shown to be the chief one apologetically.

The Messianic element in the Old Testament is traced from its earliest appearance down to the latest book; and it is shown that the Christian is justified in regarding the first promise as the prediction of a personal Saviour; that the promises to Abraham, the blessing of Judah by Jacob, the words of Balaam, the promise to Moses of the rise of a prophet like unto himself, can only be adequately interpreted by regarding them as referring to a personal Messiah. The rise of the Davidic kingdom, the relation of David's career and experiences to a great King and Sufferer who was to descend from him, the Messianic references in the Psalms, and the frequent references to the Davidic descent of the Messiah in the various prophets down to Malachi are traced. The Davidic element in the prophecies is shown to be strengthened by the birth of Jesus at Bethlehem. The cycle of predictions bearing on Christ's life and ministry and the wonderful ones relating to his death are noticed. The conflicting views of unbelieving critics and the concessions of Strauss on important points are exposed. The widespread expectation of the rise of a great kingdom in the East produced by the prophecies closes the first branch of the argument.

The prophecies relating to the Christian church are then examined. The relation of Judaism to Christianity and the superiority of the latter are shown. The predicted spread and universal prevalence of Christianity when there was no likelihood of fulfilment, and the ideal of a universal religion in the prophecies, are inexplicable on any natural theory. Objections are anticipated and refuted by the prediction of failure, delay, reaction, and corruption.

The predictions of the captivities and dispersions of the Jews, the New Testament prophecies of the destruction of Jerusalem, and the predictions concerning the Arabs, Egypt, Nineveh, Babylon, and Tyre, are examined, and the conclusions are drawn that they have not the characteristics of confessedly human predictions, that ordinary explanations are inadequate, and that the Christian view accounts for all the facts.



# PRESENT STATE

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### CHRISTIAN ARGUMENT FROM PROPHECY.

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It has been commonly and justly held that three conditions must meet in an utterance or writing to warrant its being regarded as a prophecy or used as the seal of a revelation. First, *it must lie beyond human sagacity or conjecture.* A prophecy requires to be as truly supernatural as a miracle of power. If the death of Christ could by any natural means have been foretold in the days of David or Isaiah, the notice would cease to be a prediction, being reduced to such an anticipation of the rejection of the Just One as occurs in the "Republic" of Plato; and on the same principle, the Bible threat of the downfall of Jerusalem would only rank with Macaulay's picture of the New Zealander amid the ruins of London.

Secondly, *the prophecy must precede the fulfilment.* It must not be history disguised as prophecy; and hence the Christian writer must meet the frequent allegations that the dates of Scrip-

ture books are placed too early, or that passages now look prophetic because they have received sharpening touches after the event.

The third condition of prophecy is, *that a real fulfilment has taken place*. The rationalist will grant in the Bible many bright anticipations of a golden age which according to him have missed the mark. We must be prepared, therefore, to show in history definite and specific fulfilments. It is not necessary that the full accomplishment of a prophecy should be exhibited; for surely God may accomplish a great scheme, or even a part of it, gradually.

It is a mistake, however, to treat prophecy as a purely evidential arrangement, or to lose sight of other great ends and uses served by prophetic teaching. There were all along, in the Jewish and Christian church, men who, under the name of "prophets," or some kindred one, were the great teachers of the people, not only in regard to the future but in regard to the present, expounding and enforcing all spiritual truth and moral duty, and shining out with peculiar splendor as national guides in every field of religious thought and action. They were necessary to the system called the theocracy in all its parts; and it was in virtue of this general mission that they carried out in God's name plans and measures.

where the knowledge of the future was the very condition of the enterprise and of its success. As it was theirs to work this peculiar element into the frame of the divine government of Israel and of the scheme of redemption, they could not but derive from it special authority. Prophecy, considered as prediction, both lent to and borrowed from the mighty moral scheme into which it was introduced. It prepared the way and shaped the work of all divine heralds, including the last and greatest, as well as attested their claims. It filled men with the knowledge of coming events, and thus with interest and hope in regard to them; and thus it not only made development possible, but when this seemed to be defeated or delayed, it brightened the sky and revealed again its day-star in men's hearts. This broad and comprehensive view of prophecy, as embracing moral and religious leadership, with needful infallibility on other points and, so to speak, constitutional recognition as thus endowed, must not be surrendered; but it is evident that as an argument for the gospel we must mainly draw from its superhuman intimations of the future, and fix attention on the prophet as the organ of the omniscience of Him who "declares the end from the beginning."

The predictive element in the religion of ancient Israel, which reappears in Christianity,

though but another form of the supernatural; will be found to have a singular interest and value as completing and fortifying what is commonly called miracle. One great objection to miracle urged by Hume and others entirely disappears. There is no longer here a dependence on testimony for events entirely past. If not the oracles, the fulfilments in multitudes of cases belong to our own time. Ordinary history makes good the announcement, which is not by itself a miracle; and ordinary history or observation makes good the accomplishment, which must equally be a matter of fact; and all can judge whether the miracle is begotten between them. Besides, prophecy forms a chain even more than other miracle. Every part supports every other, binding also the doctrine together, as for example in type and antitype, by its cohesion; and every fresh confirmation, even in the smallest point, supports the whole.

In this tract I shall consider prophecy as it bears *first*, on the Messiah; *secondly*, on the Christian church; *thirdly*, on the Jewish people; and *fourthly*, on the other nations of the world.

#### I. MESSIANIC PROPHECY.

With reference to the Messiah, we must mainly draw here from the Old Testament. It is

indeed striking that the predictive element in regard to Him also reappears in the New, not only in the utterances of others regarding His future, but in His own. Still it is to the earlier utterances, as farthest separated from the event and woven most into a scheme, that attention has been most directed. It cannot be denied by any candid mind that these do not admit of any explanation in harmony with mere ordinary laws.

In the earliest parts of the old Testament this mysterious element already appears. Jews and Christians have alike found such references in the writings generally ascribed to Moses. Nor do they disappear if the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch be broken up, or its date, in whole or in part, carried as far down as any of the theories which have been started on the subject may demand. The most advanced theory still places the utterances centuries before the birth of Jesus of Nazareth. The development of prophecy may not in the more novel scheme be so visible; but prophecy, or what looks like it, remains.

This applies to what has been called the first Gospel, in Gen. 3:15. It is possible so to allegorize the temptation and fall as to bring out of this verse nothing more than that the human race, apparently for ever defeated, should still for



ever overcome, even by that very defeat and suffering. It is possible to see in the words only the announcement of a destructive conflict between men and serpents. But the ordinary Christian does not put any violence upon this language when he regards it as foretelling a great and decisive deliverance for the race of man from the dark and evil power that had prevailed over it; nay, its terms support him when he goes farther, and believes it to refer to a single Deliverer, who should be in a peculiar sense the seed of the woman, and who should only crush his great antagonist by being himself bruised.

Everything in the context supports this deep interpretation of the oracle. We have on the one hand the exclusion of the race from the tree of life, and on the other, the name, expressive of returning hope, given to the woman, Havah—the living. We have the origin of sacrifice, and the fulfilment of a strife between the seed of the woman and of the serpent, in the Cainite and Sethite races begun, with the nursing of hope in the latter through the translation of Enoch and the birth of Noah. The deluge follows, confirmed so much by the Chaldæan discoveries, but still more by the moral grandeur of the Bible record, with its entire exclusion of idolatry, its clear

doctrine of judgment tempered by mercy, and its ratification of the earlier covenant by a fresh symbol prophesying the continuance of the race. There is also, in connection with the children of Noah, - taken with the following chapter, the great ethnological forecast of the history of the world, so unlike everything in the earliest literature; for as Jehovah is the "God of Shem," the leading place of the Shemite stock in religion is indicated, with the comparative degradation of the Hamite and the passing over of the knowledge of God to the Japhetic, in a way which the whole relations of Asia to Europe and reactions of Europe on Asia more and more confirm. A writer so little given to prophetic fancies as the late Baron Bunsen has been struck with this, and in his "Bibelwerk" has seen in this dwelling of Japhet in the tents of Shem what "in the highest sense is fulfilled in Christianity."\*

The next step in prophetic literature brings us into contact with the name of Abraham. His call, as it is known in Jewish and Christian theology, designed in connection with his migration to save the world from growing idolatry, has had light recently cast upon it, showing that "Ur" of the Chaldees was in the midst of moon and sun worship; and even his residence in Canaan, and

\* "Bibelwerk," I. p. 23.

war with the kings of the East, has been confirmed by the evidence of an Elamite dynasty of that age reaching westward to the Mediterranean. The first utterance of an apparently prophetic character made to Abraham is in Gen. 12:2, 3:

“I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee and make thy name great: and thou shalt be a blessing; and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee, and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed.”

With regard to this we would notice that—

First, the greatest stress is laid on it. It stands at the head of a visibly new development in the history. It is in one way or other repeated more frequently than anything else in the book of Genesis. The temporal part of the promise, that Abraham should have a son, or that he should be the father of nations, or many nations, or that kings should be his offspring, is reiterated too often to be here stated; while the spiritual side of the promise, as to all nations being blessed in him, is repeated twice again in his own lifetime, once (Gen. 18:18) when interceding for Sodom, and again (Gen. 22:18) after offering up his son. This last time it is with the variation that the families are to be blessed in his seed. In like manner the promise is renewed to

Isaac (Gen. 26:4) and to Jacob (Gen. 28:14). On this last occasion the blessing of all the nations has the formulas united with it, "in thee and in thy seed." This universality of blessing is carried over into the seventy-second Psalm, ver. 17. It cannot be doubted that we have here a turning-point, which is held to affect henceforth all Jewish and all human history.

Secondly, the sense of the words cannot be less than Messianic. I do not argue this chiefly from the creation of a separate people and the securing of a separate territory through which the work of redemption was to be accomplished. The context of Scripture would draw this passage thus indirectly to a Messianic significance. But this is only the smallest part of the oracle. How are the nations to be blessed in Abraham but in a spiritual manner? It is explained in connection with circumcision that the covenant with Abraham meant that God was his God. Was not this blessing then to be extended, so that the very blessing of Abraham should become that of the nations? It has been held by some that the grammatical form of the original only means that Abraham was to be so prosperous that the nations should wish for themselves the same prosperity. This may be here and there a Hebrew idiom; but unfortunately for this scheme it is said that Abra-

ham was to "be a blessing," and unless we arbitrarily limit the sense the nations must have wished this overflow of his deepest prosperity into their souls. The Messiah, therefore, as a Teacher and Saviour was necessary for this. And though we cannot say that the personality of the Messiah is here made prominent or sole, so far as the words go, yet it must be taken into account, in the very nature of things, so that without an Abrahamic seed the saying could not have been fulfilled.

This then leads to a third remark: that the words are not only a Messianic truth, but a real Messianic prophecy. It would not be very easy even on their temporal side to deny to these utterances a predictive character; but it might be objected that the bringing into Canaan of a new race from Mesopotamia with a new founder, though it involved great changes and race developments, might have been risked as a guess, or written after the event. But from what construction of history, or from what data in time, could the anticipation of a world-wide spiritual blessing in connection with one man have arisen? No mythic greatness of Abraham, no actual influence of his supposed Jewish seed upon the world, could have originated the story. If you take it either in its germinal character, or as expanded in the



seventy-second Psalm, the world never saw and never could have conceived a universal religion of righteousness and peace. This defies all post-dating of the Pentateuch and Psalms; for you are little nearer the phenomenon at the end than at the beginning. Is it then a dream, a mere devout prophetic craze? Those are not entitled to say so who think that the whole world has received some permanent blessing through Abraham's seed, least of all those who with Kuenen trace back to them a pure monotheism. Much less those who see the one God not only exalted, but reconciled and made nigh by the incarnation of his own Son as Abraham's great descendant, and his gospel moving on to bless all nations, and who recognize the blessing of Abraham as coming on the Gentiles by Jesus Christ, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit by faith (Gal. 3:14).

Every condition of prophecy here meets: an anterior oracle, a glimpse beyond mortal ken into the history of religion, and an actual connection of Abraham's name with an influence more and more filling the world. Why is it that nothing equal can be said of any of the shadowy kings dug up in the homes of Abraham's childhood?

An interesting step is taken in the development of this plan, as Christians believe, in the

blessing of his sons by the dying Jacob. The unanimous tradition of Judaism also, as attested in its earliest translations, targums, and commentaries has found in the blessing of Judah (Gen. 49:10) an anticipation of the Messiah. In reasoning, however, with those who have forsaken alike the church and the synagogue, I cannot lay quite the same stress on this otherwise remarkable verse as on the utterances regarding Abraham. It is, indeed, as helped by the Abrahamic oracles, and still more than in their case by the announcements of later ages, that its value to the argument is realized. But value it still has, as the force of many prophecies does not lie so much in their uniform resistless application to Christ as in their manifold and often varying, yet still appreciable, applicability. With this qualification the words deserve to be pondered:

“The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come, and unto Him shall the gathering [homage] of the people [peoples] be.”

It needs no force to put on this language a Messianic sense. Though the tribe of Judah is described in its lion-like strength and in other features of temporal prosperity, yet the oracle professes to refer to “the last days;” and the patriarch interrupts the whole series of disclosures

with the words of lofty spiritual import, "I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord!" The words anyhow suit a voluntary rule far more than a conquest; and this is indisputable and a striking additional Messianic feature, if according to Gesenius, who did not always adhere to the view, the majority of Hebraists have rightly understood by "Shiloh" a personal name, and one of the same import with Isaiah 9:6, "The Prince of peace." It is not easy to think that these words were an after-thought, designed to fill up a gap in the genealogy of the Jewish Messiah, which had now been traced through Eve and Noah, down to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and yet are we to ascribe it to accident that they coincide with the tribe of our Lord's birth and prepare for all that is said of him as the Son of David? Nor is it without weight that beyond the commanding place of Judah, which outshone everything in Israel, and at length eclipsed its name, the advent of the greater and wider Ruler should have occurred at the critical period when the sceptre was departing and had not quite departed. Although this oracle may not have the absolutely incontestable force (to unbelievers) of the blessing of Abraham, it contains so much both of prophet-like matter and fulfilment that it cannot well be disregarded.

The same remark applies to the first grand echo of this regal utterance—the prophecy of Balaam in Numbers 24:17 as to the Star that should come out of Jacob and the Sceptre that should rise out of Israel. Some may regard all this as balanced by what they may think the legend of the ass that spake, but not those who consider how masterly as a moral study the portrait of Balaam is, and how marvellous as lyrics are his oracles. For the view of this passage which makes it contain a prophecy, and that of one far beyond any ordinary king like David, who subdued Moab and Edom, there is to be considered first the whole current of Jewish interpretation. This was so decisive that when the last great effort of the Jews to shake off the Roman yoke was made under the Emperor Hadrian, the false Messiah who led them, supported by all the influence of one of their greatest Rabbis, Akiba, assumed this emblem, and was known as the son of a star (*Bar-Cocheba*). As applied to Christ, it denotes a Messiah of a very different order; and there is a peculiar grandeur in making the prophet, who had been hired to curse, pronounce a blessing on the people of God under this last and greatest of their leaders, and celebrate his enduring sway when not only present enemies, like Moab, Edom, and Amalek, but others far in the

future, like Assyria and Rome, passed away. It has been justly said that the reference to the "ships from the coast of Chittim" (Cyprus), which can only refer to the eastward movements of the Roman power, excludes every supposition which could make this a late interpolation in the Pentateuch, and constrains an application to the Messianic King, to whom the Old Testament horizon ever stretches. This lesson is independent of the star of the wise men in the Gospel of Matthew. To those who believe in miracles it will be a special confirmation that this particular feature in our Lord's history is thus pre-indicated which brings on the scene men from the east so very different from the seer who first caught sight of the emblem. But the fulfilment would have been true in a great and irresistible Saviour-King, defeating and outlasting all the powers of the world, even had no literal star heralded His birth; and thus attested by friend and foe—by the founder of Israel's line and the diviner called in to extirpate it—that royal image starts up in the Bible which never afterwards forsakes it.

It is worthy of notice, however, that the Pentateuch does not end until another figure or shadow of this coming Leader is disclosed, viz., that of a Prophet. This takes place in the eighteenth chapter of Deuteronomy, where Moses from the



fifteenth verse to the end speaks of the Prophet that should be raised up like unto himself. Two views have generally divided interpreters here. The one of these regards the text as making provision for the continuance of a prophetic body in Israel, so that the chosen nation might not be left to envy the heathen, nor on the other hand be visited with such immediate and terrible revelations as had almost overwhelmed them at Sinai. This continuous prophecy, real but mediate and human, like that of Moses, is regarded by these interpreters as the thing promised, while the Messiah is held to come in as the culmination of the whole. Now, even this view is a wonderful reach into the future, as there was no time for a prophecy after the event, and how could Moses, or any one personating him, know that he stood at the head of a continuous body, and that revelation, such as he knew it in himself, was to be prolonged to an indefinite future? But it is impossible to limit the words of Moses to this collective sense; and both what he knew of himself and what the Old Testament literature unanimously accords to him—a place altogether preëminent, must have led to a proportionately exalted idea of the coming Prophet. This does not exclude successors in his work, who rather are taken for granted; but the emphasis must have been laid upon a true equal,

one who should make a new beginning and speak with the commanding authority which he alone possessed. Hence this view impressed itself on the whole Old Testament church—as we see in the latest oracle of Malachi, and as is vouched for by the New Testament taken simply as a human document, recording among Jews and Samaritans the expectation of a transcendent Teacher and Reformer, such as the world had but once seen before. Indeed, in the circumstances of the case, to be equal to Moses was to be greater, for if Moses was simply repeated, what need of another lawgiver or founder? How, then, can the denier of revelation account for these facts; *first*, for the expectation ascribed to Moses, and *secondly*, for its fulfilment? The very desire and anticipation were singular. Great men do not usually subordinate themselves to others, or think of their work as waiting on some greater personality, who is to take up its unfinished issues. The Christian scheme of things accounts for this in Moses, who looked not only for a kindred spirit but for a personal Saviour, whose work was more than the sequel of his own. And still more wonderful is the realization of this hope, which after fifteen centuries arrived; for the prevailing opinion even of the world is that Christ is of the same mould with Moses, only greater and more commanding,

working in the same element, and making the work of Moses, which seemed exhausted or defeated, renew and exalt itself in His own. By what mystery, then, did the Christian church in its faint beginning seize on this greatness of Christ, dream—if it was a dream—that Moses stooped on the Mount to this yet obscure Prophet, and that God had even come nearer in Him than in Moses' days? He who will answer this will find the key to this oracle and a great deal more; he who will, to escape an answer, deny redemption, with prophecy and miracle as its handmaids, must make all history commonplace, and treat Moses and Jesus as alike only in bringing them down from any throne of greatness to share its fall.

Prophecy takes an extraordinary leap forward, and in another direction, with the rise of the kingdom of Israel in David. There is an intermediate figure in Samuel. But the history itself passes on to the regal period, developing what, in spite of failure in Saul, was the true meaning of all that went before, and bringing upon the scene the grandest emblem and beginning of what, in Messianic days, was to be known as "the kingdom of heaven." The glimpses in the oracles of Jacob and of Balaam, which had once and again been suddenly renewed in the dark and troubled

ages of the Judges, now break out into steady and concentrated light, and in connection with the person, the line, and almost more, the Psalms of David, lighten the world to all generations. David is indeed, like Moses, one of the turning-points in human history, as supreme in gifts, as immeasurable in grace; if not so awful and gigantic, more tender and captivating, and by his very fall and repentance brought nearer to human sympathy and tears. Fitted by unrivalled military genius and statesmanship to give the chosen people strength and repose, and, as the man after God's own heart, to build up the theocracy as a great national kingdom, and to provide it with a sanctuary and a worship that have made Zion the joy of the whole earth, he enriched that sanctuary and every other with the incomparable treasure of a sacred song, which, unlike every other form of lyric, leaves all terrestrial glories and hopes unsung, and amid the unutterable sin, sorrow, and solitude in the soul of man, is still a perpetual thirsting after God, the living God. This mission of David's, unexhausted and inexhaustible, has made him the bosom friend of all saints in every age and clime; and to this belong the extreme vicissitudes of his experience, and also his kingly elevation and trials, fitting in to the divine plan of the descent from his line of a yet greater King

and Sufferer. The announcement by the prophet Nathan to David that his line should include the Messiah, and thus last for ever, is, with no reason to dispute the statement, recorded in 2 Sam. 7, in connection with David's purpose to build a temple; and with equal beauty this oracle reappears in the "last words of David," in 2 Sam. 23:1-8, where he recalls his twofold function as one standing in relation to the Messiah and also as the Psalmist of Israel, and where he derives comfort from the covenant thus made as "ordered in all things and sure." It does not follow, indeed, that David had no revelations as to the Messiah before this last and crowning one, or that he did not see in his own checkered and wonderful life prefigurations of a yet stranger and more glorious destiny. This is one of the questions of criticism respecting which there never will be absolute unity, as to how far at any time David consciously painted his own experience; how far that of the Messiah; and how many of his royal Psalms, such as perhaps the second and the sixteenth, preceded the special promise; how many, like the eighteenth, twenty-second, and one hundred and tenth, followed it. It is enough that, whether of Davidic or Solomonic or yet later authorship, an ever-recurrent echo starts up in the Psalter of the kingly birth and call of the Messiah, and that in grand



resonant cadences, as in the seventy-second, the eighty-ninth, and one hundred and thirty-second Psalms, His descent from David fills the Christian ear in every land.

In perfect harmony with this fixed position of Davidic descent are many announcements in the pages of that written prophecy which commenced about 800 B. C. and ran down till the close of the canon in Malachi. Thus in Isaiah 4:2 mention is made of one who is simply spoken of as the "Branch" (the branch of Jehovah), but this title is connected expressly in Isaiah 11:1 with the family of David: "There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots," with all the usual attributes of the Messianic kingdom. It could hardly be urged by any objector that this might possibly apply to some other descendant of Jesse of Bethlehem than in the line of David; for the obvious reason of going back to Jesse is the decayed state into which the royal family was to fall; just as in Amos 9:11 we read, "In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen." In like manner the great oracle, Isaiah 9:6, "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given" is connected with David's line, for in the next verse it is said, "Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end *upon the throne of Da-*

*vid.*” While these utterances all seem to claim a higher nature for this ruler, as also in Isaiah 7:14, “Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel,” connection with David’s house is more or less clearly involved, as even in this last case the sign is given as a pledge that in spite of invasion the royal line should not fail, and the holy land is thus addressed, “Thy land, O Immanuel!” Isaiah 8:8.

In Jeremiah the same notices recur, evidently colored by foregoing anticipations: thus, Jer. 23:5; 33:15, “Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper.” “In those days, and at that time, will I cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David.” There is a text in Ezekiel 34:23, “And I will set up one Shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David,” which speaks as if not a descendant of David, but David himself, returning to earth, might be the future king; and the same language is found in 37:24, “David my servant shall be king over them.” But it can hardly be supposed that this prophet who shows himself everywhere so familiar with Isaiah and Jeremiah meant anything different; and we may well understand also in the same light the utter-

ance in Hosea 3:4, 5, spoken two hundred years before Ezekiel, in which, anticipating a captivity that should lead to the people of Israel being "many days without a king," he adds, "Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God and David their king." To this mass of testimony, all pointing forward to a great ruler, who should spring from David, and yet be greater, I would simply add, as the references are so well known, the two texts, one of which, Micah 5:2, declares that this ruler should be born in Bethlehem, which was David's birth-place; and another, Zech. 9:9, that he should come riding on an ass to Jerusalem, which had been the seat of David's power. We are thus brought face to face with the question, How have the deniers of Christianity as a revelation treated this great amount of striking evidence, and how far have they been able to resolve these apparent prophecies into mere natural guesses and coincidences?

It is hard to be denied that the Jewish literature, antecedent to and outside of Christianity, now preserved in the Talmud and kindred writings, applied almost all the texts which we have quoted, with others that are to follow, to the Messiah. The only noticeable exception, perhaps, is the passage as to Immanuel, where in their inter-

pretations there is something like silence, though not contradiction.\* It was interesting to see how, when the great Deistical controversy of last century was waged against the argument from prophecy, as against all other parts of the Christian argument, the leaders of English unbelief would treat these facts in the history of Jewish interpretation. Their chief representative, Anthony Collins, boldly denied not only that Isaiah and the other prophets referred to any single person or descendant of David, who thence came to be looked for as the Messiah, but that any clear or consistent expectation of such a person could be found in the line of Jewish tradition for any period worth naming before Christ.

It was not possible that such a violation of all literary fairness should not be avenged; and hence in our own century, Strauss, in order to build up his own fabric, has run the ploughshare of destruction over the foundations of that of Collins. It was not necessary in the eighteenth century to account for the origin of Christianity; but this is now the life-and-death question of unbelief; and Strauss required for this purpose a long and wide currency of expectation of a Messiah among the

\* This statement is borne out by the citations under the different texts from the great work of Schoettgen, "De Messia." Dresden and Leipzig, 1742.

Jews who was not a mere conqueror and world-monarch, but a teacher also, and even a sufferer, whom the disciples of Jesus, when their Master was crucified, might console themselves by finding, and plausibly teach their countrymen to find, in the Old Testament books and in the current interpretations of them. Hence he cannot make too much of the help of those "Jews" whom Collins treated so contemptuously, and has even possibly exaggerated the Messianic element in Hebrew and Talmudical literature. But his concessions as to the Old Testament are most important. Thus in his "*Neues Leben Jesu*, 1864 (p. 170), he says:

"In the prophets the tendency to a more spiritual form of religion was accompanied by another. They made, no doubt, the elevation of the people of Israel to true piety the indispensable condition of better times. . . . But while they painted this better future after the model of the good old times which the people had enjoyed under their king David, there was connected with this hope the expectation of a ruler of David's style, of David's line, who should exalt his people from the depth of their present fall to a height of power and prosperity surpassing the days of the David of old."

Thus the Christian church, at the very hands



of its opponents, regains its prophecies, so far as their early origin and spiritual meaning are concerned. And now the only question is as to the fulfilment; for if Jesus of Nazareth be really a descendant of the royal family of David, here is a most wonderful reach into the future in the case of one who is confessedly the most remarkable figure in history. Hence the royal descent of Jesus is denied by Renan, who charges him with assuming the title "Son of David" not ignorantly, but against his own better feelings. "He allowed them to give him a title without which he could not hope for any success."\*

Renan does not seem to see that if Jesus accepted the title, as is granted, he must have done so not only in good faith, but, considering his means of knowledge, with moral certainty; and that to affirm the opposite is to aggravate all the difficulties and contradictions put by him into what he admits to be the greatest of human characters. Strauss here, though he does not thus degrade the Saviour morally, is involved in equal perplexity. He grants that the Messiah was universally believed among the Jewish people to be the "Son of David." He grants also that Jesus claimed to be the Messiah. And he grants that he applied to himself the prophecies

\* "Vie de Jésus," p. 238.

above quoted from Isaiah and Jeremiah which foretold that the Messiah should have this descent. How then can Strauss exclude the inference that Jesus believed himself to be the descendant of David? By the most arbitrary supposition, that Jesus wished to educate his disciples and the people into the idea that the Messiah was not to be the Son of David, which was a mere worldly name, but something more spiritual. The only shadow of proof that he can adduce for this is that Jesus challenged in the temple the current interpretation of the one hundred and tenth Psalm, and wished to suggest that the Messiah was not to be David's Son, but his Lord, though Strauss, of course, cannot grant that he contended for any higher nature as his prerogative. But what this intermediate something between Davidic descent and a higher nature was which Jesus here suggested, Strauss has not explained, and as his interpretation had no precursors, so it has had no successors. It is as certain then as anything can be, if we grant the least historic value to the narratives, that Jesus was not only regarded by his followers, who had the best means of knowing, but by himself, as the descendant of David; and when we think of the care with which the Jews kept their registers, and even of the security which a great family tradition like this always

carries with it for being accurately transmitted, we may consider it, in all the circumstances of the case, as truly remarkable that so much evidence confirms this lofty claim. There are difficulties in the genealogies, but these have not been found insuperable by the ablest scholars; and the fact that the Davidic birth was believed, not only by the evangelists, but by Paul, Rom. 1:3, and by the author of the Apocalypse, whom most rationalists now regard as the apostle John, Rev. 22:16, but above all by the Founder of Christianity himself, and was accepted in an age when the whole evidence was patent, as a foundation-principle of the new religion, must be held far to outweigh these remaining obscurities.

Far stronger, however, does this Davidic element become when we take in the actual birth of Jesus in Bethlehem, apparently foretold, as we have seen, in Micah, 5:2. Jewish tradition was here, as far as we know, unanimous; and, according to the Gospels, it found its accomplishment. Strauss cannot here deny the agreement with Micah; for as the mythical theory demands, the history itself must be moulded by the earlier notice and its Jewish echoes. But can the perversion of history as he holds it be admitted, and a Christ born at Nazareth be turned into one

born in Bethlehem? Strauss has granted how difficult it was to do this when the facts were so widely known. Why, then, are the evangelists to be credited with a tortuous and unhistorical procedure instead of a simple and true one? Or how can Strauss and Renan find any authority for roundly asserting, against their united testimony, that Jesus was born at Nazareth? There is here nothing like miracle in the fact itself, and now to follow, now to desert, the evangelists in natural events (and it was quite as natural for a subsequently renowned Jew to be born at Bethlehem as at Nazareth) is mere license. Luke brings Jesus to Bethlehem, they say, to fulfil a prophecy; and do they not remove him to escape one? The prejudice is at least equal, and unfortunately for the modern critics, they are not, and cannot be, themselves authorities in ancient history.

With regard to the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem, the city of David, as the foregoing notices in Zech. 9:9 are so clear as to have drawn after them an immense body of Jewish Messianic tradition, so the historical accounts in the Gospels are less contested. Reimarus in the last century founded on the incident his attack on Jesus for attempting to set up a temporal kingdom. Renan incorporates the essential facts in

his own narrative.\* Strauss, though he affirms that the tradition was sufficient to have created the history, also grants that the history in itself might well have happened.† The whole tendency of recent Gospel criticism, and especially the failure of objections to the fourth Gospel, which here, in a rare instance, repeats an incident fully stated in the synoptists, confirms the admission. Let it be remembered also that the tenth verse of the ninth chapter of Zechariah has had a great fulfilment: for he who rode in this lowly triumph into Jerusalem has been a true Davidic king, as elsewhere pictured, and especially in the seventy-second Psalm, cutting off the chariot, the horse, and the battle-bow, and speaking peace to the nations. If any say therefore that Jesus rode into Jerusalem arbitrarily to fulfil the prophecy, they are met by its own terms; for the history of the world has supported him, and "His dominion has been from sea to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth."

At this point a brief notice may be given of the large cycle of apparent predictions bearing on Christ's life and ministry. It seems to be indicated that some messenger should go before him, as in Isaiah 40 : 3 and Malachi 4 : 5, 6; and as in this passage Elijah is mentioned, the prevalent

\* "Vie de Jésus," p. 375. † "Neues Leben Jesu," p. 526.



opinion of the Jews has been that Elijah should literally return and do this office for the Messiah. It is equally certain that Jesus claimed to be thus heralded by the Baptist and that John took this position. It is easy to say that there is mistake of prophecy or exaggeration of friendly relations here. But the singularity is that the coincidence in time of two great teachers—one of whom, if the narrative be worth anything, thus stooped to the other—is an historical fact which could not have been foreseen; and all that is needed to make it a prophecy is the use of a figurative name for a literal, a feature quite common in the prophetic style. It is worthy of remark that Riehm, a high authority in these discussions, though adverse to detached and sporadic interpretations, regards this as a true prediction, and one which brings out the depth of the Old Testament.\*

The same writer, whose reserve and caution no one will question, accepts as "quite unassailable, by historical criticism, the surprising accordance of New Testament fulfilment, Matt. 4:13, with the Old Testament prophecy, Isaiah 8:23, that to the dwellers by the Lake of Genesaret and Jordan, of the tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali, the light of Messianic salvation should

\* "Messianische Weissagung. Studien and Kritiken," 1869, II. 271.

first arise;”\* where it may be added that, alike in the oracle and the history, the “darkness” of a depressed, outcast, and half-paganized state strangely contrasts with Renan’s pictures of Galilee.

That the Messiah should work miracles, so as at least not to fall below the great names of the Old Testament period, was, as all admit, universally expected by the Jews. The writers who support the mythical or legendary theory appeal to Isaiah 35 : 5, 6, which furnished, according to them, a kind of programme such as Jesus was bound to fulfil. Strauss is here inclined to think that Jesus disclaimed in his reply to the messengers of John physical wonders, and applied the text of Isaiah only to His cures on the soul. All the literal cures which he allows to Jesus were due to nervous sympathy and influence of imagination. But Strauss has here unwittingly involved himself in great difficulty. He grants that the people were sufficiently cool to credit the Baptist with no miracles. He grants that the class of marvels which were truly miraculous, such as cures of the blind and raisings of the dead, were then, as always, in the nature of things, distinguishable from natural effects on the nervous system.† He also grants that the people

\* Riehm, p. 277.

† “Neues Leben Jesu,” p. 267.

expected from the Messiah the greatest wonders. He has therefore failed to explain how miracles without reality made such an impression, and has thus left the supernatural narratives as necessary as ever. But if so, do not the prophecies also stand? Had the words of Isaiah been meant for true miracles they could not have been stronger; and it is one of the infirmities of this scheme that in seeking to generate an ideal miracle from an ideal prophecy it threatens to establish the reality of both.

All ages have admired the exquisite beauty of thought and harmony of numbers with which the Davidic king, in the first half of Isaiah, is brought upon the scene, while all nature is transformed by his sceptre into gentleness and peace. Not less enchanting are the pictures in the second half of the book, where the monarch passes into the teacher, the comforter, the inexhaustibly tender and patient servant of Jehovah, who feeds his flock like a shepherd, who has the tongue of the learned that he may know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary, "who does not cry nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street, and who does not quench the smoking flax nor break the bruised reed."

Is there one being in all history to whom these words and many others are so instinctively applied

as to Jesus Christ? and could he have more significantly begun his ministry in Nazareth than by quoting and applying to himself the utterance, "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek," etc.? Isa. 61 : 1. Do we not hear already the words of beatitude, "Blessed are the meek," "Blessed are they that mourn," "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden"? It is vain to speak here of a first and second Isaiah. If there are two, it is still more wonderful than if there is one. Nor is the argument weakened by the various application of the title, "Servant of Jehovah," now to a collective Israel, and now to one individual or "Elect," in whom the idea of service is perfectly realized: for much of prophecy, as in the Psalms, is equally typical, and the unity of Christ and his body is thus revealed. The applicability of these Isaian oracles to the meek and lowly Teacher has impressed even recent leaders of unbelief: for Renan has caught something of sympathy with their incomparable charm, for which Christians may forgive him much that is otherwise alien and degrading; and Strauss has been softened almost into recognition. He holds that Jesus applied all these features of meekness, patience, and suffering to himself, and formed himself on this wonderful

model, instead of the warlike and victorious Messiah of popular anticipation; and now that these oracles—hundreds of years old—even if they pointed only to the better part of a race, should thus at length come true of it, and of one transcendent person in it, who is the Teacher of the world, is not this almost as strange as what a Christian believes?

Of all the predictions claimed for the Messiah the most wonderful are those which bear upon his death. This is a fresh singularity, that, as Christians attach so much importance to this event, the Old Testament should seem here also to concentrate its rays. Jewish tradition is here less copious, though not without striking testimonies; and the offence of the cross, either before or after the Christian period, led to the conception of two Messiahs: the one, the Son of Joseph, who should suffer and die; the other, the Son of David, who should reign. When the prophecies are now studied in the light of history, much of this darkness is cleared away and is seen to have lain mostly in the prejudices of Jewish readers. Modern difficulties are largely of the same character, such as objections to the doctrine of atonement, aggravated by the reluctance to admit what, if true, is so visibly supernatural. How far recent German theology has emerged from these strug-



gles may be seen in writers whom no one will charge with "blind orthodoxy." Thus Riehm says: "Of this agreement, the most remarkable example is the 22d Psalm, where the image of the crucified Christ, surrounded by his triumphant enemies, comes out unmistakably for every Christian eye." He in the same place also appeals to "the agreement of the picture which the prophecy of the 'Servant of Jehovah' has drawn with that of Christ in many quite special features." Isa. 42 : 2; 50 : 5, etc.; 53 : 2. To the same effect Delitzsch, in discussing Isaiah 53, says: "Now for the first time the type of sacrifice, which was previously dumb, begins to speak through the idea of the Servant of Jehovah. He pours out his soul in death, and his soul thus brings a satisfactory offering, which atones and makes reparation for the sins of the people. He takes the guilt of his people's sins upon himself. . . . The Servant of Jehovah dies and is buried, but not in order to remain in death, but that he may live eternally as the priestly and royal head of a great congregation."\* Thus also, when he has applied to Christ the two oracles in Zechariah that speak of the pierced One (12 : 10), and of the Fountain opened (13 : 1), he adds in regard to the smitten Shepherd (13 : 7), "The New Testament refer-

\* Delitzsch, "Messianic Prophecies," p. 86. Clark, 1880.

ences, Matt. 26 : 31, etc.; Mark 14 : 27, are so far fully justified as they apply these utterances to Jesus Christ, to his death and its consequences.”\* So also Oehler, while granting a starting-point in a collective Israel, says : “ Chapter 53 [in Isaiah] can only refer to an individual. Hence Ewald, e. g., regards this portion as interpolated from an older book, in which a single martyr was spoken of. For it is not the heathen who speak, as the utterly erroneous view now so widely disseminated asserts, but the prophet, now in the name of the prophets in general, ver. 1, ‘ Who hath believed our report?’ and now in that of the people, ver. 6, ‘ All we like sheep have gone astray,’ etc. The sense of guilt is so vivid, even in the case of the prophets, who know themselves to be the servants of God, that they include themselves in the sinful mass of the people, for whom an atonement is needed: ‘ We are all as the unclean.’ Comp. 59 : 12. Hence a valid intercession for the people cannot proceed from them (59 : 16), nor can even the aggregate of God’s servants effect an atonement. On the contrary, it is upon the foundation of its intuition of those witnesses who have suffered in the cause of truth that prophecy rises to the intuition of One in whom the image of the faithful servant is complete—of One who, not for

\* Delitzsch, “ Messianic Prophecies,” p. 106. Clark, 1830.

his own sins, but as the substitute of the people, and for their sins, lays down his life.'''\*

These testimonies of eminent Christian theologians, trained in somewhat different schools, are interesting; but far more striking, to my mind, is the concession here of Strauss, one of the most important in the course of apologetic literature. It is known that in his early editions of his work, from 1835 onward, he denied to Christ any certain knowledge of his own death or announcement of it to his disciples. But in 1864 his new life of Jesus discloses that on so serious a question he has changed his ground. He avows his belief that Jesus not only announced his own decease, but did so in terms of such oracles as Isaiah 53, which had been the model of his life and doctrine.

"As to the calling of the teacher, patience is indispensable, as the unwearied instructor must take into account ingratitude, and overcome the prejudices of men by long-suffering. As in the history of the Jewish prophets examples were before Him of several who had sealed their fidelity to the religion of Jehovah, as through them proclaimed and defended, by a martyr's death, there thus arose for him an approximation to those features of the servant of Jehovah which con-

\* Oehler, "Theology of the Old Testament," II. p. 426. Clark, 1875.

tained suffering, torture, and cruelties even unto death. It is possible that from the very beginning Jesus kept closer to the features of the first class, and that he wished to be the Messiah in the sense of the still and patient Teacher; but the more he encountered among the people a want of receptivity and positive resistance, the more that he saw the hatred of the rulers excited against him, and was convinced of its irreconcilable opposition, the more had he occasion to take up also the strictly suffering features of Isaiah 50th, 52d, and 53d into his Messianic conception, to ponder the examples of earlier prophets, whom he alludes to in Matt. 23:37 and Luke 13:33 and elsewhere, expecting, like them, extreme measures, apprehension, condemnation, and execution, and to prepare his followers for such an issue. That point of view also which led him to contemplate the devotion of his life as a 'ransom for many,' Matt. 20:28, his death as a reconciling sacrifice, he could well have appropriated to himself from Isaiah 53, as this view in general lay near the Jewish circle of ideas.' '\*

Thus for once there is agreement between the Christian writers and the leader of unbelief as to the long antedecence of the oracles and their historic fulfilment, both in the meaning of the

\* "Neues Leben Jesu," pp. 223, 224.

prophet and the spirit and aim of the Sufferer. It is not necessary to bring in features of suffering from other Scriptures; the broad general outline of that one chapter is unique in history. Nor can it be said that the dwelling on the prophecy and repeating it led to its fulfilment. Christ had no power to secure his own public condemnation and execution on ordinary principles. Hence this restrained Strauss so long from admitting that He predicted such a death. But the strength of the Christian position remains and is confessed. The premises are admitted, of which Christianity is the only conclusion, and the name of Jesus stands written upon the greatest phenomenon (we must not call it miracle) in history.

With regard to the resurrection of the Messiah the light of prophecy is much less distinct and clear. Still, both the twenty-second Psalm and the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, which speak of the Messiah's death and follow it up by setting forth his life and victory, thereby imply a resurrection. In like manner the sixteenth Psalm, v. 10, whether we read it in the singular or plural, requires a resurrection; for corruption is escaped only by His people and by himself through his rising from the grave. A typical prophecy was here in place—the sign of Jonah, as Christ interpreted it; and though this may not have been un-



derstood in its full meaning before the event, it had in it a true inherent light, and is now added to the impressive list of singularities that by a proved correspondence connect at every point the Old Testament with the New. Those who have regarded Jesus as able to learn from the Old Testament his own death, but bound to stop there, or only led to hope for a spiritual life in heaven or a victory of his cause on earth, are incoherent; and the gospel narratives, which make his views of prophecy embrace both death and resurrection, are at once grander in their scheme and truer in their history.

One word in regard to the dates in prophecy that have always been remarked, though some are less secure than others. The sceptre was not to depart from Judah; and in the very time when the last trace of self-government was vanishing, the Messiah came. He was to come to the second temple, Mal. 3:1, and make its glory greater than that of the first, Hag. 2:7-9. Seventy weeks were to elapse, Dan. 9:24, 25, from the decree to rebuild Jerusalem unto Messiah the Prince, which upon the calculation of a day for a year, Ezek. 4:6, have been plausibly carried down by Dr. Pusey and many others from the edict of Artaxerxes (B. C. 457) to the opening of Christ's ministry. More solid than any of these

is the coming of the new kingdom, in Dan. 2 and 7, after four great world-monarchies, which the same writer has, in its Messianic fulfilment, so ably defended against the shifting schemes of recent criticism. Data like these undoubtedly produced a wide-spread expectation of some great kingdom to rise in the East, of which we have evidence in the well-known passages of Josephus, of Tacitus and Suetonius, and echoes in the Sibylline books and Fourth Eclogue of Virgil. Even if we had had no other Old Testament indications, the very connection of this great approaching change with the Jewish people and with Jerusalem would have been a chronological landmark, since on any fair construction the events could not have happened had Israel already become a wandering multitude, without a territory and a capital, as they have been for eighteen centuries.

## II.

In passing over to the branch of the prophetic argument which treats of Christianity as its subject, Christ himself is not left behind. It is Christ in his church, as before in his own person. The prophecies bearing on Christianity may be reduced to three points—its succession to Judaism, its victories, and its failures and corruptions.

I. The succession of Christianity to Judaism is one of its most interesting features. The relation of type and antitype exists nowhere else among religions. No one can say that any of the forms of paganism is the same analogue of the gospel as Judaism is; nor can Judaism be said to be in the same sense an analogue of Mohammedanism, for they stand more nearly on the same level, and the one is a plagiarism from the other. Had Mohammed been able to make out in his system an advance in the line of Christianity, or even of Judaism (as he wished to do), this would have been more like the voice of Providence than anything he had to show. But Christianity in relation to Judaism, as the Christian understands both, is this visibly higher type; while the same thing cannot be said of Judaism after the Jewish Messiah comes, as compared with what it is before. The Jewish Messiah has little to bring of prophecy, and nothing of priesthood; and his kingdom is more external than that of Christianity. Even the true Old Testament Judaism was inferior, with youth, immaturity, and restraint; but still there was a vigorous family likeness. There is thus a real foretoken of something to come—a covenant God, a moral worship, with all its local and ceremonial features, an availing though future propitiation, a high though unrealized practical

standard, and a mission to the world yet held in abeyance. Was not this, then, a prophecy of the coming religion, as the lower type in nature is a prophecy of the higher? If another system, or rather the old system under new conditions, has redeemed, as the Epistle to the Hebrews explains, the promise of the Levitical law, given wings to the Decalogue, and bursting its own embankments, diffused its blessings among all nations, shall we not see in those tendencies and capacities the augury of this future? But the Old Testament is not thus a silent witness: it is a speaking one; and besides the testimony as to the Prophet like unto Moses, there is the great announcement of a better priesthood, Psa. 110:4, "Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek;" and there is also in Jer. 31:31 the clear assertion of a new and better covenant of which the distinction should be its superiority in spiritual influence as seen in laws written on the heart. Now, can any candid unbeliever deny that this is the superiority of Christianity over Judaism, even in its best state, and much more as depraved by Jewish traditions? Is not then this sublimation and consummation of Judaism the fulfilment of prophecy? And ought it not to be so regarded by all writers who—as almost all rationalists do—here side with Christ against his

Jewish opponents, and concede that relatively to them he has made a great advance in the religion of the world? It is impressive to an unbeliever, but still more to a Jew, who sees his ancient sanctuary in ruin or worse than ruin, and his synagogue in all lands confronted by the Christian church, which has transferred to itself all his watchwords and memorials, his patriarchs and his kings, his law and his prophets, his altars and his sacrifices, his circumcision and his passover, his Zion, his Jerusalem, his Canaan, and has connected them with one great Presence which exalts and overshadows all! - Is there not here a great cycle in the spiritual world? Can chance foretell and then achieve such revolutions as these?

2. The next striking point is the prediction of victories for Christianity in the form not only of development, *but of diffusion and universal prevalence*. How great was the unlikelihood of any fulfilment! No one can say that the prophecy here comes after the event; for the prophets feel that they have to contend rather with unbelief in their hearers, and call on the mighty power of Jehovah as alone equal to the extremity.

"I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee and give thee for a covenant of the people and for a light to the Gentiles." Isa. 42:6.



Whence this unwonted faith, even greater than the world-wide sympathy and philanthropy of which it is the minister? There is no progress here either in the range of expectation or in its confidence. Both are as wide and strong in the days of Abraham as of the last of the prophets. Many details are supplied and many astonishing figures employed: as that the Jewish temple should be exalted to the top of the mountains, and be the centre of a universal pilgrimage, Micah 4:1; Isa. 2:1; that wild and savage beasts should be transformed, Isa. 11:6-9; that a mighty river should go forth towards the Dead Sea, and heal everything in its course, Ezek. 47:1-12; that a Spirit poured out from heaven should inspire a universal gift of prophecy, Joel 2:28, 29. Under these figures such solid realities are conveyed as the utter abolition of idolatry, Isa. 2:18; the spread of the knowledge of Jehovah as the waters cover the sea, Isa. 11:9; the prevalence of a deep holiness, Zech. 14:20; and the practical enjoyment by nations of righteousness and peace, Psa. 67:12-14. These blessings are invariably represented as going forth from the Jewish people to other nations, and again and again from Jerusalem, Isa. 2:3; Zech. 14:8; and while they are always connected with a new appearance of Jehovah, they are very often specialized as introduced by the

Messiah, and also, in signal instances, Psa. 22; Psa. 53, traced up to his sufferings and death. How, then, was this Jewish enthusiasm for the salvation of the world originated, in a race in many respects so narrow and limited? How did it survive the dampening effect of decay and corruption in their own religion, flourish in exile, and resist the incrustations of local and national sectarianism, till it found a glorious revival in Jesus and his disciples, who were ready to die for its fulfilment, and who actually did begin the fulfilment of it in a wonderful degree? Whence this magnificent ideal of a universal religion totally wanting in paganism, wanting too in Moham-medanism, except with dependence on brute force and concessions to sinful lust which degrade and ruin it? The Christian church has been struggling, as yet inadequately, for eighteen centuries to realize it; but it fires her warriors still with congenial ardor, and the noblest of them, falling in the field, throws the casket which contains it outward into the region which it is yet to conquer. The greater the soul, the more does it, like these martyrs of an illimitable and imperishable faith, "move about in worlds not realized," "weep by the rivers of Babylon," and "favor the dust of Zion," the more does it dwell with their spirits and with His who from the re-

jection of the cross looked forth upon a universal empire of truth and love. Is this enthusiasm and the success which has crowned it soluble upon any principles of unbelief? or has unbelief in itself the moral greatness to suggest an answer?

3. The last element of wonder in these prophecies of victory *is the shade of delay, reaction, and corruption that blends with success.* In the prophets it is chiefly, if not exclusively, delay and failure. Far from being moved to write their prophecies, as some have supposed, only as suggested by the march of Assyrian armies or the last rumors from Egypt or Babylon, or from seeing in the next change of the political horizon the birth-pang of the Messianic age, they rise through the grandeur of the events described into something of their own tranquillity, and can make their watchwords, "He that believeth shall not make haste," Isa. 28:16; "I the Lord will hasten it in his time," Isa. 60:22. Hence they can repeat each other's oracles, and form a chain of expectation stretching through many years; and in the great future they can blend with calmness features of disappointment in the reception of the coming salvation, and most of all, the fall of Israel, which, as in Isaiah 49, mysteriously darkens the calling of the Gentiles. They can hardly, indeed, anticipate the corruptions of Christian-

ity; for the prophetic language had hardly lights and shades for the varying features of an Israel beyond Israel. But in the New Testament this generality is resolved; and the strange fortunes of the gospel itself in history, as made up of triumph and failure, of purity and corruption, of strength and weakness, and that not only in one age, but as more or less cleaving all through to its career, are most strikingly delineated. Broadly there stands out the unbelief of the Jews, and their exclusion from the kingdom, in the utterances of Christ himself and the apostle Paul; nor can this be regarded as mere natural revenge, for it is announced with the deepest sadness, and a day of repentance is descried. The history of the world has followed the one set of notices, but has not yet overtaken the other; and how is this foresight so far to be explained?

Equally striking is the foreshadowing of Christianity in its other miscarriages and reverses. Most of all its corruptions are marvellously pre-indicated. While the great parable of the sower predicts only a partial success for the divine seed, the two kindred parables of the tares and of the net cast into the sea foretell and cover all depravations of doctrine and inconsistencies of practice. It is still the kingdom of heaven, but of heaven tarnished, degraded, almost buried, by

earth. Nothing gives us a higher idea both of the intellectual reach and moral greatness of the Saviour than these parables! The kingdom of heaven, with all its sad degeneracy, is worth living for and dying for; and though He comes not to send peace on earth but a sword, he is straitened till his baptism is accomplished. Those who condemn Christianity for its abuses find their objections here foreclosed. A religion so candid, so prescient of its sorest wounds in the house of its friends, might disarm even the prejudice of its enemies. The very largeness and sadness of its confessions might propitiate their dislike. It is not an outward foe that Paul describes in Second Thessalonians, but one seated in the temple of God, and rather restrained by outward hindrance, as the Christian writers so generally understood the passage of Roman persecution at length withdrawn, and opening the way for the church to generate a worse antichrist from its own bosom. So the antichrist of the Apocalypse, whatever else it may include, cannot exclude the shapes of heresy, pride, and tyranny under Christian names, which like successive monsters from the abyss have made war upon the Lamb and delayed the peaceful consummation of his reign. These embroiled, entangled, inextricable scenes, only to be interpreted as they are lived



through by a sad but ever brightening experience, how could they have been conceived beforehand by any mortal intelligence? How could they in their grandeur, their terror, their ultimate dramatic unity and outburst of light and praise, be other than the forecastings of One who, above the illusions of superficial strife and sudden victory, suffers the whole unfathomable powers of evil to disclose themselves, that in one all-inclusive conflict they may be defeated and destroyed?

### III.

The third prophetic topic to be noticed is the bearing which prediction has on the history and circumstances of the Jews. I shall speak first of the captivities and dispersions of the Jewish people, and secondly, of the New Testament prophecies of the destruction of Jerusalem.

I. There is, to begin with, not the slightest doubt that Jeremiah, following Micah, who lived a century before, foretold the destruction and captivity in the Chaldæan period, and added the notice of a return after seventy years. This is recorded in Jer. 25:9-11; and the circumstances are such that if the delivery of this prophecy be denied, no event in the life of the prophets can be accepted. Now this issue could not have been foreseen by any natural means. The return of a

departed people was against all historical analogies, as not only the case of the ten tribes showed, but the existing usage, on which recent discoveries have thrown so much light, of occupying such conquered lands by an exchange of peoples, that admitted usually of no succeeding break or disturbance. Now the utterance of Jeremiah was fulfilled by the edict of Cyrus, B. C. 536, a fact which is not contested; and all that is required is to suppose that Jeremiah, instead of counting from the last siege and captivity (B. C. 588), counts from the first (B. C. 606), as captivity then really began. It is not desirable to lay undue stress on this incident, however remarkable; and its chief weight lies in bringing into relief the pre-intimations of another and more terrible captivity and dispersion, from which there has been as yet no return. Without bringing in here utterances in the Gospels, there is in the Old Testament alone quite enough to point forward to the present captivity and dispersion of the Jewish people. The leading passages are Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28, and these if read over to any number of dispassionate hearers, who should then be asked whether they applied better to Israel in Babylon or to Israel scattered as it has long been throughout the world, would suggest only one interpretation. There is no

word more prophetic in all history than this: "Thou shalt become an astonishment, a proverb, and a by-word among all nations, whither the Lord shall lead thee." Deut. 28:37.

The marvel is increased by the sense of long-continued endurance which these oracles involve, and also of adherence to their own religion, for though it is foretold that they should serve gods of wood and stone, which has been abundantly fulfilled in their enforced conformities to idolatry or superstitions forbidden by their strict ritual, it is evidently taken for granted that they should still be a nation continuous in their old profession, and should at length by repentance return to favor with their fathers' God. All through the writings of the prophets a wider and longer dispersion seems to be contemplated than was fulfilled in Babylon, and a sorer trial of national vitality; and thus only a promise like that in Amos 9:9 acquires significance: "For, lo, I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel among all nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth."

The centrifugal force of world-wide dispersion, with the centripetal of national cohesion, could not have been more distinctly expressed. It is not the calamity of national downfall, of expatriation and wandering to the ends of the

earth, of proscription and outrage such as may well make Christians blush, even when it still breaks out in our own century; it is not even the tragic cause, as Christians believe, of this unmatched disaster, and which weighs like a doom not finally exhausted. It is the power of resistance—the invincible reaction against all forces of change or dissolution, the stubborn identity with his fathers—which from the heights of modern commerce or the fair equality of intellectual and political conflict, as from the depression of other days, makes the Jew still retire into solitude to nurse a sad memory or a hope yet unfulfilled. Were the Jews converted, and were Palestine restored to them, would unbelief be able to hold its own? What would unbelief have said had they been converted as easily as the Franks or the Saxons? or had Palestine been for long centuries the peaceful seat of an unconverted Hebrew people to whom the Roman conquest had been nothing more than the exile in Babylon? We should then have heard enough of the argument from prophecy on the other side, and should have had reason to fear, as we have not now, for the truth and the success of the gospel of Christ.

2. With respect to the second chief point bearing on the Jews—the alleged prophecies by Jesus of the destruction of Jerusalem, as preserved in

the first three Gospels—it must indeed be frankly granted that we have not the unanimous accordance by critics of every school, Christian and non-Christian, as to the existence of these Gospels previous to the year (A. D. 70) when Jerusalem was taken. But we have what may be called a great revolution in criticism going on from the days of Strauss, who would not allow that we had clear evidence of the existence of any of the synoptists till the middle of the second century, down to our own time, when leaders of negative opinion bring up at least one of the Gospels before the Jewish catastrophe. Thus Hilgenfeld brings up Matthew, in its supposed Hebrew form, and Keim in its Greek; while Hitzig before them had done the same for Mark. A critic so thoroughly unfettered by tradition—though not negative—as Bernhard Weiss, places Mark in 69; yet one can easily see how hard it is, even for great scholars who disbelieve in the supernatural, to grant the earlier date, since a real prophecy springs at once into view. The conduct of Strauss here presents one of his remarkable vacillations. Though anxious to place Matthew so late, he is constrained in his first editions to grant that Jesus may have uttered the words ascribed to him, drawn from Jewish tradition, as to some overthrow of the temple, and helped perhaps by Daniel 9:26, 27.



He argues against their being put into his mouth after the event, for then Matthew would not have added (24:29) that the speaker announced himself as coming "immediately" in the clouds: since this the event had falsified. On reflection Strauss seems to have thought that even this was a less difficulty than to grant the reality of the utterance, which made Jesus and Daniel too like prophets and Matthew too like an early historian. Hence, in his new "Life of Jesus," he comes down to the grosser theory of a prophecy so minute and elaborate being an *ex post facto* creation. No other scheme remains, unless we hold with Renan that Jesus, speaking of the temple buildings, "divined that they would have a short duration,"\* and at the same time that such words were "lent" to him by the evangelists.

But if we must fall back on prophecy after the event, and prophecy so extended, so terrible in its details, so startlingly coincident in its most awful features, as Strauss grants, with Josephus and contemporary history, then what are we to think of the honesty or intelligence of the evangelists who could put all this into the mouth of Christ? Macaulay wrote the "Prophecy of Capys," but he only put it into his "Lays of Ancient Rome," and not into a Roman history;

\* "Vie de Jésus," p. 211, and p. 273, note.

so that the Gospels sink into lays, if not into frauds. This is opposed to the whole evidence of their historic character, and also to the fact that in the very passages in question they go far beyond the fall of Jerusalem, to its long-continued desolation and treading down by the Gentiles, which could not then be suggested by the event. Unquestionably Christ elsewhere anticipates a longer career for the victories and trials of his gospel; and in these very oracles the so-called "times of the Gentiles," which had to be "fulfilled," cannot be limited to one generation, and that the generation which (as in Matt. 16:28; Luke 21:35) had enjoyed his own presence.

#### IV.

The fourth and last head of prophecy is that bearing upon the other nations of the world. The mere predictive aspect of these manifold notices is not that which is chiefly regarded. The main design is to show that the Gentiles are also amenable to moral government, with its laws and retributions, and that a place is preparing for them in the Messianic kingdom, which could only be theirs through the downfall of pride and the turning from idolatry. Some specimens only of prediction from this wide field are selected. If

prophecy has here failed to predict, it is the most splendid failure in all history.

To begin with the notice of Ishmael in Gen. 16:12: "And he will be a wild man [literally, a man like the wild ass of the desert]: his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him: and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren." No picture could be more complete of the wild liberty and defiant, untameable independence of the Arab people to this day. Nor will their descent from Abraham's son be denied, which is their own cherished belief, whatever of other and kindred blood, and even of alien, may have mingled with theirs to form the "great nation" predicted in Gen. 17:20, and which has so moulded the history of the world. That this people who have written their name, though in a spurious copy, beside Judaism and Christianity on the monotheistic faith of the world, should have such a notice and prefiguration in the history of Abraham, is to say the least singular; and while predictions of great non-Christian writers as to Mohammedanism are now being falsified, the features of the Arab race that framed it, and left even their weakness upon it, stand in the Bible as sharp as ever.

It is no great transition to pass from Ishmael to Egypt, linked through Hagar with Arabia,

and itself coming in the Old Testament as early on the scene. Very little of Isaiah, Jeremiah, or Ezekiel bearing on Egypt has been challenged, though accounted for by political sagacity, moral foreboding founded on experience, or where these fail, remodelling after the event. The unexpected results of Assyrian exploration, even more than of Egyptian, have confirmed the accuracy of the prophetic record. The sagacity of Gesenius—rationalist though he was—kept him from contesting the conquest of Ashdod by Sargon, Isa. 20, though that monarch never appears outside the Bible; and now the full inscription, involving also the connection with Egypt, is recovered. So likewise the conquest of No (Thebes) in Nahum 3:8-10, is in every point verified, and all the perplexities which had led this to be regarded as an interpolation are at an end.\* These verifications also support a fulfilment of Ezek. 29:8-12 regarding a desolation of Egypt by Nebuchadnezzar for forty years. Though we have as yet no mention of this, the humiliations of Egypt by Assyria in the two foregoing cases at so much earlier a date remove the difficulty, and lead us to appreciate at its worth the remark of Mr. F. W. Newman, "Happily the grasp of the Chal-

\* Schrader, "Keilinschriften," pp. 398-9, Second Edition. For "No" (Thebes), p. 450.

dæan was more limited than human imagination.”\*

It is in the same chapter of Ezekiel that what is here called his “human imagination” enabled Ezekiel to draw so wonderful a picture of the debasement of Egypt, which notwithstanding the transient splendors of the Ptolemies, remains so true to this day: “It shall be the basest of the kingdoms; neither shall it exalt itself any more above the nations: for I will diminish them, that they shall no more rule over the nation.” Ezek. 29:15. In connection with the Ptolemies, we have the series in Daniel 11 respecting their relations as kings of the South with the Syrian monarchs as kings of the North, which Porphyry, the greatest antagonist of Christianity in the third century, found so accurate that he could only explain it as written after the event.

There are notices even in Hosea of the Assyrian captivity, Hosea 10:6; 11:5; and the great prophecies of Isaiah respecting the deliverance of Jerusalem in his day received, as all admit, remarkable accomplishment. Even Sennacherib on the Taylor cylinder does not claim to have taken Jerusalem; and we can read between the lines his own defeat. The final downfall of Nineveh is wonderfully foreshadowed in Nahum

\* “Hebrew Monarchy,” p. 326.



3, where he compares it to the capture of Thebes, indicating the action of fire, which all the Ninevite remains so illustrate.

Even more distinct as to a final desolation is Zeph. 2:15: "This is the rejoicing city that dwelt carelessly, that said in her heart, I am, and there is none besides me: how is she become a desolation, a place for beasts to lie down in! every one that passeth by her shall hiss and wag his hand." The dreary solitude of the mounds from which such precious treasures have been dug could not have been more terribly expressed. Yet these words of Nahum were written about B. C. 660, when the reign of Asur-bani-pal was at its zenith; and those of Zephaniah, who is generally placed some thirty years later, could not possibly be suggested by any long-continued overthrow.

Of the references to Babylon in the prophets, it is necessary to select only those bearing on its downfall and ruin. Even Gesenius allows here a natural meaning,\* but as he honestly admits that he cannot believe in an Isaiah writing this more than a century and a half before, and thus is shut up to a second Isaiah, this gives no solution; for how could this Isaiah, even if living in Babylon, know beforehand that the city was to

\* "Jessia," 3:33; 3:88.

fall or what was to be the manner of its capture? Still less could he know that Cyrus was to restore Jerusalem its temple? Thus we come back to our universal remedy, prophecy after the event: and yet how can this help us as to the desolations of Babylon, continued as they are to this day? Gesenius refuses here, as generally, the more extreme rationalistic consequence of fictitious prophecy, satisfying himself with portents on the horizon; but what horizon in the sixth century before Christ could suggest this? and ought there not to be a third Isaiah (almost like the "wandering Jew") who may receive the fatherhood of it many centuries later? Mr. Newman grants that this is one of a series of prophecies against Babylon which have received either a most accurate or a very plausible fulfilment.\* He seeks, however, to weaken the argument by saying that "it is absurd to represent the emptiness of *modern* Babylon as a punishment for the pride of Nebuchadnezzar." This, however, is a new style of theology, unless we hold that all sin is punished only in those who commit it; for if the next generation may suffer from a Nebuchadnezzar or a Napoleon, why not a more remote one? and is sin ever exhausted?

Another set of monumental prophecies against

\* "Hebrew Monarchy," p. 315.

pride, luxury, and impiety is the grand series against Tyre, begun in Isaiah and ended in Ezekiel. The doom in Ezekiel 26, that Tyre should be "a place to spread nets upon," has, as travellers attest, been literally fulfilled. No great emporium has ever had such an elegy; and its echo survives in one of the sublimest chapters of the Apocalypse (18). As an example of prophecies said to have failed may be mentioned Damascus, of which it is said in Isa. 17:1, "It is taken away from being a city, and it shall be a ruinous heap." But this is explicable by a temporary desolation such as was actually inflicted by Tiglath-pileser on the Syrian capital. We should have known what to think had prophecy attached all its curses to cities as continuously flourishing to this day as Damascus, or had Nineveh, Babylon, and Tyre been still, in spite of it, the centres of worldly greatness. But these shafts do not fly at random. Unlike the Homeric arrows in not being due to mere anger, their clang is terrible, and they fix their mark in decay and ruin.

In closing this tract, one or two conclusions may now be suggested as flowing from the consideration of this evidence in all its parts.

### 1. *These alleged prophecies want the characteristics*

*of such as are confessedly human.* They are not trivial or connected with ordinary human interests. They are not mere divinations, designed to amuse, to startle, or to gratify curious prying into the future. They are not Delphic or studiously ambiguous; for whatever of obscurity be in them, they bear the stamp of sincerity, and many of them are cheeringly, as others alarmingly, straightforward. They are not connected with any caste pursuing class interests; for though the prophets are a body and succession, their unity is chiefly in suffering; and while their oracles awake to bright hopes, they call to stern duties.

2. *Ordinary explanations are inadequate.* "Prophecy after the event" is so. It is discredited by the best rationalists. The act or habit is degrading to men who are still looked on as the moral instructors of the world. Anything like it would not be tolerated in the journalist, the historian, the ethical teacher of modern times, and only in the poet with understanding of his license. Nor is "coincidence," pure and simple, an adequate cause. This has been seen to be so frequent, so startling, so like to design, that the argument from design applies; and design here involves knowledge more than mortal. Nor, once more, can "sagacious forecast of moral order" suffice. This is the most respectable solution short of inspiration. But it

quite breaks down. What brooding on moral order could attain to such prophetic results? How could Abraham thus know that his call would bless all nations, or David that the Messiah should spring from him, or the prophets that particular kingdoms and cities should be destroyed, or Christ that his religion should fail with the Jews and succeed with the Gentiles? The evidence must be taken in detail; and when it is seen how often the sense of insufficiency returns, this is the mark of a solution radically weak and abortive.

3. *The Christian view of prophecy not only accounts for the individual facts, but for the whole.* Prophecy is systematic, progressive, and all-inclusive. The theory of a revelation of redemption accounts for these features. Christ is then the centre, and hence all is connected in him; and at the same time the Messianic part of revelation is largest, most important, most like the heart in the economy of the whole. This accounts also for the progress that we have seen, a progress in all directions and towards all issues, but all conditioned by the approach of Christ and by the fulness of the disclosure as to his person and work and its consequences. And this accounts for the all-inclusive character of the predictions. The Gentile future must stand in the light of the Jewish past and be indebted to it.



The Jewish unbelief must serve as a foil to the Gentile faith, and be at length reconciled to it and one with it. The world's kingdoms must go through their crises of trial and judgment, to prepare the world as a whole for the Heavenly King. Thus, with prophecy, there is a Redeemer, and with Him a philosophy of history leading upwards; without prophecy, no redemption, but law and sin fastened down by it, and any streaks in the darkness like a prophetic glimmer due to no rising orb, but meteoric, and born of chaos or night. Ought not the Christian then to give heed to this "sure word," which is attested, as it is created, by a power above nature just where it needs to be? and may he not hope as he prays that to others also this day may dawn and this day-star arise?

THE ORIGIN  
OF THE  
HEBREW RELIGION.

AN INQUIRY AND AN ARGUMENT.

BY  
EUSTACE R. CONDER, D. D.

## ARGUMENT OF THE TRACT.

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WHAT rational explanation can be given of the religion of Ancient Israel? Characteristic features of the religion of the Old Testament Scriptures. 1. Alliance of RELIGION with HISTORY. 2. Organic UNITY. 3. DEVELOPMENT. Critical objections. Evidence against authenticity of the books, *negative*; in favor, *positive*.

I. Bible starts not with dogma, but HISTORY. Yet its whole purpose religious: a history, not of human affairs with supernatural episodes, but of God's dealings with mankind. Peculiarity of the history: annals of *one family line* from Adam to Christ. Distinguish between "substantial truth" and infallibility or inspiration. Literary merit of Genesis. View of human life. Faith, prayer, providence. Unique character of Hebrew national life. Contrast between Genesis and subsequent books of Moses. 1. MIRACLES. Origin of religion. Professor Max Müller's view. Modern repugnance to miracles. Hence rejection of Mosaic authorship of Pentateuch. Science and miracle. Another form of objection. Adequate purpose of miracles recorded by Moses. 2. RELIGIOUS CEREMONIAL, including (a) a Sanctuary; (b) Sacrifice; (c) Priesthood. (a) The Tabernacle; symbol of Divine Presence. (b) Priesthood; contrast with that of Egypt. (c) Sacrifices. Ewald's erroneous assertion. Contrast with pagan rites. Mutual connection of the religion and the history. Enormous improbability involved in hypotheses of modern destructive criticism.

II. UNITY and DEVELOPMENT. Nature of unity discoverable in Bible. Must have adequate cause. Fundamental religious idea: Being and Character of God. Creation. Man in moral relation to his Maker. Divine authority and mercy. Contrast with heathen literature. Divine attributes of "RIGHTEOUSNESS" and "HOLINESS." Transference of this latter idea to God. Hebrew idea of holiness not ceremonial but moral. Hebrew view of SIN. Human interest of Old Testament Scriptures; yet pervaded with underlying thought of man's sin and sinfulness. Hebrew terms. Conception of sin moral, not ceremonial. Central idea which gives unity to religious teaching of Old Testament. Purity. Tenderness. Needless to discuss the view which ranks the Hebrew with pagan religions, since our whole inquiry refutes it. Science is bound to study and give account of phenomena so abundant and significant. Absurdity of hypothesis that the national genius of the Hebrews produced their national religion. The crucial test. The UNIVERSAL RELIGION.

# THE ORIGIN OF THE HEBREW RELIGION

*AN INQUIRY AND AN ARGUMENT.*

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WHAT rational explanation, satisfactory to a thoughtful and candid mind, can be given of the religion of ancient Israel as exhibited in the Old Testament Scriptures? Are its existence and character explicable by the same causes which have produced the other ancient religions of the world? We may here leave out of view the question whether in fact those religions sprang simply from the working of the human mind, or had a common root in primeval revelation. Let us take them as we find them in the most ancient records. Would it be a rational theory of the religion of ancient Israel to say that it originally resembled the religions of Assyria and Egypt, Phœnicia and Greece, but that these religions were somehow arrested in their development, whereas the religion of Israel reached by gradual development that

form and force which place it in such stern but splendid contrast with the other faiths of mankind? If so, what was the secret of this unique development? How came it to pass that a small and despised nation, destitute of philosophy and of art, whose literature outside its sacred books has left no mark of human thought, whose history was a series of failures, culminating in the most tremendous overthrow that ever crushed and broke up a people, should have succeeded, where India, China, Egypt, Greece, Rome, all failed? How is it that Judæa has produced in Christianity, which claims to be simply the perfect flower and ripe fruit of Judaism, the one religion which has both the ambition and the prospect of conquering the world and furnishing the supreme bond of unity for the human race?

These are questions which claim the attention of the thoughtful skeptic as much as of the Christian believer. He cannot afford to put them lightly aside, for doubt ceases to be "honest doubt" if it trifles with evidence. The only skeptic who merits either respect or sympathy is he whose "open eyes desire the truth."

Whatever view we adopt of the origin or of the teaching of the Old Testament Scriptures, we must admit that they hold a unique place in literature. The translation into English, by emi-



nent scholars, of "the Sacred Books of the East" enables the English reader to compare and contrast the Hebrew Scriptures with all other sacred writings in their structure and contents, as well as in their influence on human thought and history.

Three characteristic features may be named as deserving special consideration: the manner in which the Hebrew Scriptures connect religion with history; their organic unity, doctrinal and historical; and their progressive development of religious teaching.\*

"What do you mean," it may be asked, "by speaking of *unity* and *development* in the Old Testament Scriptures? Do you mean to assume the authenticity of the several books, and that their assigned dates correspond with the real order in which they were produced? These are the very points on which 'the most advanced modern criticism' claims to have passed its sentence and overset the faith of ages." Of course. But it will not do for modern criticism, while denying the infallibility of the Bible, to claim infallibility for its own conclusions. They too must be criticised. No doubt there are points of minute

\* Other characteristics are treated with consummate force and beauty in Henry Rogers' Lectures on "*The Superhuman Origin of the Bible*."

scholarship in Hebrew as in other ancient languages where the judgment of an expert is entitled to very great respect. Yet even here, when the point is such as can be made plain to an English reader, common sense may put in a claim to a vote. But such capital questions as whether the Pentateuch was really written by Moses, or is a tissue of forgeries and fragments compiled a thousand years after his death, do not hang on such elaborate niceties. They must be weighed in bigger scales than those in which critics weigh vowel points and various readings. They turn on broad and solid considerations, as to which every thoughtful and educated English reader may qualify himself to form a competent judgment.

The account these ancient documents give of themselves has at all events a presumption in its favor until evidence be produced to prove them unauthentic or spurious. Positive evidence against them there is none, and in the nature of the case can be none, unless a rival history of equal or greater antiquity could be discovered. The arguments against their veracity and antiquity are all indirect, of the nature of objections. On the other hand, the evidence in favor of the immemorial tradition of the Hebrew nation as to their authorship is positive, and of immense

value—consisting in the structure and the contents of the books themselves. Add to this the impossibility of giving any satisfactory account of them if they be forgeries.

The candid skeptic may say that, having weighed fairly both the evidence and the objections, the latter appear to him to preponderate. But he must not treat the evidence as non-existent. And it is a sound rule of both common sense and criticism that when positive evidence is conclusive, even insoluble difficulties cannot overthrow it.

Two other considerations deserve to be borne in mind. First, that supposing the books of the Old Testament to be genuine, any dislocation of their real historical order (such as the conjecture that portions of the Pentateuch were written by Ezekiel or by Ezra) must altogether confuse and disguise their religious teaching. Secondly, that if these books, taken in their traditional order, exhibit a unity and progress which disappear on any other arrangement, a powerful argument will be supplied that the traditional order is the true order. If the pieces of a model fitted in one order produce a symmetrical building, and in any other arrangement a shapeless heap, no sane mind doubts which of these shows the design with which they were fashioned.

Guided by these plain principles, let us examine those characteristics of the Hebrew Scriptures above indicated: viz., the VITAL CONNECTION they present between RELIGION AND HISTORY; the unity of thought, sentiment, and practical aim underlying their great variety of form; and the PROGRESSIVE DEVELOPMENT of religious doctrine which they display—not final, but pointing forward to a fuller unfolding.

## I.

The Bible begins not with dogma, but with history. It says nothing of the being and attributes of God, but shows the Creator at work: “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.” It says nothing of religion, but shows the ancestors of mankind created in the image of God, and placed at the outset in moral relations of obedience and responsibility to their Creator. This is its method throughout. It gives us no religious teaching apart from particular persons, places, and events. Even the law of the Ten Commandments, the most perfect summary of moral and religious duty extant before Christianity, is recorded as matter of historical fact—uttered by a divine Voice to the assembled people of Israel, and afterwards graven on stone tablets “with the finger of God.” Yet it is impossible

thoughtfully to study these writings without perceiving that their whole aim and meaning is religious. The story they tell is not that of human affairs, with a mingling of the supernatural, but of God's dealings with men. Even those painful episodes which a historian anxious for the honor of his race would gladly have omitted, are found on this view to have their place and meaning.

Another peculiar feature of the early portion of these records is that they take the form of family annals. In Genesis 4 a fragment is given, tracing the line of primogeniture for six generations. But in chap. 5 a new departure is indicated by the title "the book of the generations of Adam;" and the line is traced from Seth to Noah. In chap. 10 we have "the generations of the sons of Noah," the family tree of nations. In chap. 11 "the generations (or genealogic record) of Shem" traces the line to Abraham. It has often been erroneously supposed that this is a list of eldest sons. Abraham himself, like Shem, was a younger son. Abraham's line divides in the twin sons of Isaac; but it is not till after the death of Isaac that the family records take a new start, chap. 36 giving "the generations of Esau, who is Edom,"\* and chap. 37 introducing the history

\* The discussions which have been raised on vers. 31, etc., do not concern us here. See, e. g., the "Speaker's Commem-





of Joseph with the words "These are the generations of Jacob." After this there is no further break. The family of Jacob gradually develops into the twelve tribes which constituted the nation of the "B'ney Israel," children of Israel. What makes this genealogical character of Old Testament history the more noteworthy is that in the New Testament Scriptures it is taken as the starting-point of Christianity. In the first and third Gospels the line of Abraham, Israel, Judah, David is traced down to Him whom St. Paul calls "the second Adam." With him the record stops, never to interest mankind further.

Along this single line of human life, claiming to connect the life of the first human being with the times of the Roman Empire, the Hebrew Scriptures, followed by the Christian Scriptures, represent an equally continuous chain of divine manifestation and divine dealing as having been carried on, assuming for some fifteen centuries a national form, yet from first to last designed for the benefit of all nations of mankind.

Nothing parallel to this is to be discovered in the whole domain of human literature or of history on this chapter. Supposing it can be shown that these verses were added by a later pen, this no more affects the integrity and authenticity of Genesis than our modern practice of making additions to ancient books in the form of notes affects the authority of such books.

man religion beside. It must have a meaning and an explanation. And the more deeply it is studied the more difficult I believe it will be found to invent any explanation other than the reality of the divine manifestation and the substantial truth of the history. If Moses was the writer of Genesis, we can well understand how he may have been able to collect and arrange the sacred traditions of his forefathers, together with those which may have been preserved in the family of the "priests of Midian," among whom he spent forty years of his long life. But if Moses' authorship be denied, and the Pentateuch supposed a compilation of late date by various hands, its form, style, contents, and religious teaching furnish an insoluble problem.

I have spoken of "the substantial truth of the history," because we must not here assume any theory of inspiration or infallibility. It is quite possible to believe that Moses wrote the Pentateuch, and wrote in perfect good faith, and yet to suppose that he had no means of discriminating historic fact from legendary fiction in the annals of his forefathers. He wrote, it may be argued, what he believed to be true; but criticism is to be applied to test the actual truth of his narrative. Take for example the account of the creation. To some readers the employment of the

word "day" appears so irreconcilable with the facts of geology as hopelessly to shut out the notion of divine inspiration. To others, on the contrary, no less thoughtful and competent, the general agreement of that marvellously terse record with the history of life graven in the rocks is nothing short of a miracle of knowledge, utterly beyond the reach of the unaided human mind in that remote age, or, indeed, in any age previous to our own.

Again, the long term of life ascribed to the antediluvian patriarchs, and to their descendants down to Abraham, and even later, appears to some critics self-evidently fabulous. To others the present brevity of human life and the rapid decay of the bodily organs appear perplexing and mysterious; and it seems to them inherently probable that the early generations of mankind nearer the fountain of life possessed a far larger share of vital power, involving a capacity no longer possessed of renewing tissues and organs during many centuries.

The paradoxical opinion has even been maintained, with great ability and with undoubted sincerity, that the early narratives of Genesis are mythical legends, but are nevertheless divinely inspired. To those who bow with unreserved faith to the teaching of our Lord and his apostles

the testimony of the New Testament to the historical truth of those narratives seems sufficient and decisive. But at whatever judgment the reader arrives on these and the like points, or even if he holds his judgment in suspense, the religious teaching of Genesis—the general view of divine manifestation to man and dealing with man—abides the same, and demands to be considered and accounted for.

The wonderful simplicity and terseness of the book of Genesis probably conceal from the multitude of readers its transcendent literary merit. The story of Joseph is perhaps the finest example of narrative in literature, while the speech of Judah is an unsurpassed model of natural eloquence. The story of the mission of Abraham's servant to Mesopotamia is equally perfect in its way; but its fulness of detail—the *scale* of the narrative—has no parallel in Scripture. Had the Bible narratives in general been given on a similar scale of detail the bulk of the Scriptures would have been increased many fold.

The feature of Old Testament religion we have been considering is not peculiar to Genesis or to the Pentateuch. It pervades the Hebrew Scriptures. It is not that *history is made the medium of religious instruction*. That would be a most narrow and mistaken view of the matter.

It is that religion is shown as the soul of history, the supreme reality and central power in human affairs, the deepest foundation of human life. But while this keynote rings loud and clear throughout the Bible, it is struck in Genesis with unsurpassed boldness and truth. God is shown as the ultimate source of all being, preparing the earth from the beginning to be the home of man. Man's very existence is traced to God's purpose to realize his own likeness in human nature. Man is shown as conversant with God as soon as he began to know himself and the world around him. The foundations of marriage, property, labor, moral duty, and responsibility are all laid in God's revealed will and man's conscious relation to his Maker. Moral evil, or sin, is represented as wilful disobedience to the known will of God. The tendency to evil is shown to be hereditary as well as personal, and teeming with seeds of increase. Human life is regarded as a whole, and God is seen as the Ruler and Judge of mankind, as well as the personal Friend and Saviour of every one who fears and trusts him. FAITH, as the mainspring and sheet anchor of the religious life; PRAYER, as direct personal converse with the unseen Father of spirits, and as actually heard and answered by him; and DIVINE PROVIDENCE, as regulating all human



affairs, from the greatest to the least, are so exemplified in these ancient Hebrew annals that the stories of Abraham, of Jacob, of Joseph, possess an undecaying charm for Christian minds of the highest spiritual culture. They are typical for all time. No example of after ages has been able to cast them into the shade.

The "Pentateuch" is so called because, from time immemorial, perhaps by the author himself, it has been divided into five sections or "books." But there is no break of continuity. The narrative passes briefly over the centuries, at first of peaceful prosperity, then of bitter adversity, during which Israel's descendants "increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty." It hastens to tell the story of the deliverance from bondage, and of the creation of an organized nation out of the twelve clans which claimed Joseph and his brothers as their ancestors. But it links on this history with the story of Joseph by his remarkable request concerning his embalmed remains; which request we are assured was reverently obeyed on the departure of Israel from Egypt, and finally fulfilled in the Promised Land, Exod. 13:19; Josh. 24:32.

With the narrative of the Exodus, the forty years in the wilderness, and the conquest of Canaan is interwoven the record of the National

Code and Constitution, political, religious, moral and social. The historic reality of the divine manifestation to Abraham, Isaac, and Israel is assumed as the necessary starting-point of God's dealings with their descendants. His promise to Abraham is treated as a "covenant," to which divine faithfulness stands irrevocably pledged. But a new starting-point is given immediately after the deliverance by a fresh "covenant" granted by Jehovah and freely accepted by the people. "Moses went up unto God, and the Lord called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel: 'Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. Now, therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine; and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' . . . And Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before their faces all these words which the Lord commanded him. And all the people answered together, and said, 'All that the Lord hath spoken we will do.' And Moses returned the words of the people unto the Lord." Exod. 19: 3-8.

Such a record has no parallel, in fact or fiction. Many lawgivers have claimed divine authority. Many sacred books have been accounted divinely inspired. Many nations have deemed themselves patronized by a national deity, and favorites of heaven. But this description of the founding of a nation and laying the basis of national legislation by a solemn contract of sovereignty and obedience between the Almighty Creator and the representatives of the whole nation, is absolutely unique in its sober majesty, severe literal reality, and moral grandeur.

On the basis thus laid the whole fabric of legislation and framework of national life, according to the books of Moses, rested. All the subsequent history proceeds from this starting-point. The religion of personal faith, prayer, and obedience depicted in Genesis is never lost sight of; but it is overshadowed by the religion of national faith, public worship, and obedience to the law binding on the nation. The Ten Commandments, and the subsequent laws given by Moses are expressed in such a form that the word "thou" may apply equally to the individual Israelite or to the nation. Divine providence and government are illustrated on a corresponding scale. The wanderings of Abraham, Isaac, and

Jacob, and the sufferings and glory of Joseph, illustrate God's care and control of personal history down to its least details. Egypt, the Red Sea, Sinai, the desert, the manna, the water from the rock, the pillar of cloud and fire, teach a like lesson in regard to national history, on a scale never equalled, never to be repeated.

The religious teaching of the remaining four books of Moses stands therefore in vivid contrast with that of Genesis, especially in two of their most striking features: a stupendous series of miracles, and an elaborate religious ceremonial involving a hereditary priesthood.

1. Two unparalleled miracles are recorded in Genesis: the deluge and the destruction of Sodom and its neighbor cities. These excepted, miracles occupy no prominent place, save in the form of those divine communications, by voices, visions, angelic apparitions, and the like, which were indispensable in the absence of any written revelation, if man was to converse with his Maker and learn his will.

The origin, not simply of the Hebrew religion, but of religion itself as a prominent fact of human nature and history, has been debated as a riddle yet needing solution. The Bible account of the origin of religion is that man began his journey on this globe not as a deserted orphan turned

adrift to seek God as best he could, but in communion with the Father of spirits. God talked with him, and he could talk with God. God marked for him the path of duty, and it lay in his choice to walk in it or to wander from it. If men ceased to know God, it was by their own neglect and sin; because, as St. Paul says, "they refused to have God in their knowledge." Rom. 1:28, R. V.

This view of a primeval revelation is strongly combated, even by writers who hold that religion is natural and indispensable to man. Professor Max Müller, in his extremely able and fascinating "Lectures on the Origin and Science of Religion," speaks even with contempt of the belief that religion originated in divine revelation. It is, he argues, an absurdity. "When man has once arrived at a stage of thought when he can call anything, be it one or many, God, he has achieved more than half his journey. He has found the predicate God, and he has henceforth to look for the subjects only to which that predicate is truly applicable. What we want to know is, how man first arrived at the concept of the divine, and out of what elements he framed it; afterwards only comes the question how he was able to predicate the divine of this or that, of the one or of the many."

By parity of reasoning it ought to be impossi-



ble for a child to know its mother until it has "found the predicate," or "framed the concept," "mother." Afterwards only ought to come the question to whom that predicate is applicable, and whether he has many mothers or only one. The fact, as everybody knows, is the other way. A predicate implies language. A concept implies power to abstract and generalize; it is a *generalized judgment*, or group or series of judgments, applicable in virtue of a common name to several objects. None but a mother fully knows all that the predicate or concept "mother" stands for. But long before the cradled child can perform any such intellectual feats as abstraction and generalization—not only before he can talk, but before he suspects that there is ~~such~~ a thing as speech, he is perfectly conscious of his mother's presence and love. Feeling awakes while reason yet slumbers, and opens the door to knowledge. The infant born blind, to whom its mother is an invisible presence, acquires the same emotions, the same certainty, through the sensations of hearing and touch. The nascent intelligence instinctively penetrates behind the veil of sensation into the world of spirit.

Precisely similar, according to the account in Genesis, was the method by which the eternal Father of spirits revealed himself to his new-born

offspring. We are neither warranted nor forbidden by any express statement to assume any visible manifestation of divine glory to our first parents. They "heard the voice of the Lord God." They were sensible of an awful, commanding but loving and protecting presence. They conversed with their Maker. Thought and speech are represented as already called into exercise, in the naming of the lower creatures, before man found "a help meet for him," a companion spirit akin to himself. It is reasonable to think that the current of intellectual, moral, and spiritual life, as well as physical, flowed strong so near to the fountain-head. The task of acquiring language, which toilsomely occupies two or three years or more of infancy, may have been condensed into a few weeks, days, or hours. Our parents could already understand the language of command, promise, and warning when they were placed under law and their welfare made dependent on their obedience.

Compared with recent hypotheses of the slow and painful ascent of man from irrational, speechless, lawless, godless, apeshood, the Bible account has at all events the advantage of dignity, beauty, intelligibleness, and analogy with the known facts of human experience.

The two tremendous miracles of destruction

which are repeatedly referred to in the New Testament as typical examples of divine judgment on sin—the deluge and the overthrow of the cities of the plain—stand out in awful and vivid contrast with the general tenor of the narrative in Genesis. These excepted; the miracles of the deliverance from Egypt, and of the wilderness, are as unprecedented in their colossal greatness as they are unique in character. Modern criticism finds in these miracles unquestionable proof of what it terms the “unhistorical” character of the narrative. Repugnance to miracles is a marked feature of our age, though by no means peculiar to it. The so-called scientific argument against miracles is in substance that invented by David Hume in the last century.\* Stripped of ingenious rhetoric it amounts to this: Miracles are

\* Professor Huxley has clearly and candidly pointed out the error of Hume’s argument (“Hume,” p. 133). But he misses the mark altogether when he tries to illustrate the incredibility of miracles from the supposed alleged occurrence of some isolated incredible phenomenon, such as the apparition of a live centaur. The miracles of Scripture are not isolated occurrences. Their evidence consists in their *setting*, their vital place in the history, and the impossibility of really explaining the history without them. If a race of centaurs had left their bones in the rocks, we should be compelled to believe in their existence; and the miracles of the Pentateuch and of the Gospels have left stronger witnesses than fossil bones—living results.

incredible because they are impossible; they are impossible because they have never been known to happen; and the proof that they have never been known to happen is, that they are incredible and impossible. Any experience, therefore, which affirms that they have actually been witnessed must be false. Thus barely stated, this celebrated argument makes but a poor show of either science or logic.

Hence the skeptic is forced to maintain that the Pentateuch was not written by Moses. Because, setting aside not only inspiration but even honesty, if the great lawgiver simply possessed ordinary common sense, it is incredible that he should have based his whole legislation on imaginary prodigies, and appealed to the whole nation to testify to the truth of accounts which every man, woman, and child knew to be fables. If then Moses really wrote the Pentateuch, the miracles recorded in Exodus and Deuteronomy must really have taken place. They are facts of which science is as much bound to take account as of any other facts in human experience.

That the intense culture of science begets in many minds a disposition to skepticism regarding miracles (or even skepticism of a wider range) is neither a stain upon science nor an argument for unbelief. It is simply an example of the infirm-

ity of human intellect. Absorbing devotion to any branch of study always involves the peril of getting the intellect cramped in one attitude, the mental vision stunted to one focus. Preoccupied with the grand ideas of immutable law, and of the unchanging order of nature, the student of science is apt to forget that in every experiment by which he interrogates nature, every word he utters, every movement of his limbs and fingers, he is a living example of the power of personal will to control nature without interrupting the uniformity of law. A miracle is simply an exercise of the divine will to produce a special result. It is absurd to suppose the Creator devoid of that power which is put forth by every child who flings a stone into the air, hits a mark with an arrow, or in any other way subjects matter and force to his will. It is ridiculous to assert that the Almighty Maker has so tied his own hands with the laws of his own universe that he cannot do what he sees wise and good to do.

“Miracles,” the skeptic may rejoin, “are not abstractly impossible, but it is incredible that the Creator would ever derange the grand and solid order of his universe for the purpose of astonishing or converting a few thousands of half-barbarous Hebrews, the rest of the world meanwhile remaining ignorant of the alleged mir-



acles." The argument is thus removed from scientific ground, where it has no real standing, to the moral, which is doubtless its proper field. Calmly examined in this light, the objection against the miracles of the Pentateuch is transformed into a powerful argument in their favor. For supposing that the special exercise of divine power which we term miracle is credible, provided the end to be answered is of adequate importance, let the reader consider whether any end could be more worthy than to impress on the mind of a whole nation with an indelible force which no lapse of time could weaken the lesson of the omnipotence, wisdom, goodness, and power of the Creator, and the vanity of whatever else is called God; to inspire their faith, attract their love, awe them into implicit obedience, and prepare their minds to receive the divine law as the basis of personal, social, and national life; especially if this nation traced back its origin to ancestors to whom special divine manifestations had been made and promises given regarding their remote posterity, and was designed in fulfillment of those promises to keep alive the light of sacred tradition, and to furnish in the fulness of time the teachers of the whole human race.

In what other way is it conceivable that these lessons could have been effectually taught to the

Hebrews? True, the immense majority of mankind were ignorant, and even down to the present day are ignorant, both of the miracles and of the lessons. But this is but one example of a law which governs all human progress. Truth, like light, radiates from fixed centres. Great discoveries, destined in the long run to revolutionize human life and history, are at first the possession of a few, or of a single mind. As matter of historic fact, an unbroken living chain of religious faith, teaching, sympathy, prayer, and practice connects the tent of Abraham and the legislation of Sinai, through the life and teaching of Jesus, with the religious life of modern Christendom, and with the moral power (the only one yet discovered) which has shown itself capable in the Sandwich Islands, in Polynesia, in New Guinea, in Madagascar, in South and Central Africa, of lifting half-barbarous or wholly savage and brutal tribes into civilization, morality, and liberty.

2. The second strong contrast between the religious teaching of Genesis and those of the later books of Moses is presented by the elaborate religious ceremonial ordained by the Mosaic law. The leading elements of this system were three: a sanctuary, or consecrated centre of worship; sacrifices, most accurately discriminated and classified; and an hereditary priesthood.

The Tabernacle, or "tent of the testimony," which accompanied the march of Israel, taken down when the host moved and set up where they halted, taught the great principle—a lesson likewise taught at the burning bush and at Sinai—that sanctity is not inherent in any consecrated spot, but depends on the divine Presence, to be expected and bestowed wherever the people of God are assembled. What the Tabernacle was to the camp, the Temple afterwards was to the land and to the holy city.

The principal idea symbolized in the Tabernacle was evidently that of divine Presence—Jehovah dwelling in the midst of Israel. The ideas of worship and sacrifice were secondary, dependent on this. The pillar of cloud and of fire was the visible miraculous witness that this divine Presence was a reality. The people were to consider themselves a nation of priests. Sanitary regulations, military order in camp or on march, political assemblies, personal behavior, as well as religious worship, all were to be ruled by this sublime idea—the presence of the divine King with his chosen people.\*

\* E.g., Exod. 25:8; 29:42-46; 33:15, 16; Lev. 26:12; Deut. 23:14. Our English translators have not been careful to preserve the distinction between the two Hebrew words applied to the tabernacle: *mishkan*, habitation, and *ohel*, tent. The term *Shekinah*, used in later Hebrew for the manifestation of

An hereditary priesthood was familiar to the Israelites as an Egyptian institution. But whereas the priests of Egypt were a territorial caste, over whose lands the State had no control, Gen. 47:22, 26, the law of Moses enacted that the tribe of Levi should not share in the division of the land of Canaan, excepting a number of allotted cities, each with a narrow strip of land surrounding it. Consecrated to the service of Jehovah, they were to be sustained by the free-will offerings of the nation.

Animal sacrifices, unlike the tabernacle and the tribal priesthood, were no novelty. From the beginning they had been recognized as the appointed mode of divine worship. The book of Genesis contains no record of their institution; but the statement, Gen. 3:21, that after the transgression of our first parents the Lord God clothed them with skins, has been reasonably interpreted to imply that they were commanded to the divine glory, is connected with the first word, cf. John 1:14. The two are distinguished in Exod. 40:18, 19. The habitation or tabernacle proper was the structure of gilded boards, with its hangings of woven work. The tent of goats' hair, Exod. 26:7, was spread over this inner structure. The covering, *mikseh*, of leather and sealskin (see "Speaker's Commentary" on Exod. 25:5 for this rendering) seems to have been a light, strong waterproof over-roof, to throw off rain and snow. The same word is used of the deck or roof of Noah's ark, Gen. 8:13.

sacrifice the beasts, whose skins they were then instructed to prepare and wear as symbols of the *covering* or pardon of sin through atonement.

What appears to have been novel in the sacrificial ritual established by Moses was the elaborate distinction and classification of animal sacrifices under the three principal kinds of burnt-offering, sin-offering, and peace-offering or thank-offering. The name for the first literally means "that which goeth up," namely, in fire and smoke to heaven. The second, the name for which properly means "sin," includes the "trespass-offering." Authorities are divided as to the meaning of the name of the third class—"peace-offering," or "thank-offering;" but the general idea is the same. Ewald asserts that previous to the legislation of Sinai "the most varied forms of sacrifice had been long in operation, each with its special drift and corresponding belief."\* But he can furnish no proof of this assertion beyond the casual intimations in Exod. 10:25; 18:12; possibly Gen. 31:54, that *some* distinctions were recognized. The sacrifices of Noah and of Job are expressly called "burnt-offerings;" and from Gen. 22:2 we gather that those of Abraham were of the same character. It is generally acknowledged that the most prominent idea sym-

\* "Antiquities of Israel," p. 25, Solly's translation.



bolized in this kind of sacrifice is that of complete consecration to God. . But the idea of atonement for sin is very plainly recognized in Job 1:5; 42:8. In like manner the idea of atonement must not be excluded from the peace-offering, as is plain from Lev. 3:1, 2; 17:1-14. During the sojourn in the wilderness, when the main sustenance of the Israelites was the daily manna, no beast was to be slaughtered for food without being treated as a peace-offering.\*

The sacredness of blood, as representing the soul or life, was indicated in the law given to Noah, Gen. 9:4. But the atoning value of blood is first distinctly set forth in the case of the Pass-over lamb, Exod. 12, which may be considered the prototype of the peace-offerings. Ewald truly says, "No heathen nation had such ideas about human sin and divine grace as had the people of Israel, . . . so that it was only in this nation that the blood assumed this unique and exalted significance, and only there that it became the centre of the whole sacrificial procedure."

Among heathen nations, as in the poems of Homer, we find the custom of offering to the gods a portion of the flesh and a libation of the wine at banquets. At first sight this seems closely to re-

\* Compare Deut. 12:15, 16 for the modification of this law after they entered the Promised Land.

semble the thank-offering or peace-offering of Hebrew worship; but on reflection we discover a wide and important difference between sacrificing a part of the feast and feasting on a sacrifice. In the one case the gods were invoked as guests at the banquet; in the other God himself is regarded as bidding his children to his table. Thus, of the seventy chiefs who with Moses, Aaron, and two of Aaron's sons were admitted to the feast of the peace-offerings in Sinai, on the ratification of the covenant, and to a vision of the divine glory, we read, "They saw God, and did eat and drink." Exod. 24:5-11.

The connection between religion and history, noticed above as the first great distinctive character of the religion of the Old Testament Scriptures, is strongly marked with regard to these three essential elements of the system set up by Moses: the Tabernacle, the Priesthood, the Sacrificial Ritual. All three, in the records which have come down to us, are inseparably interwoven with the main facts of Hebrew story—the deliverance from Egypt, the encampment at Sinai, the covenant between Jehovah and his people, the giving of the law, the stubborn rebelliousness of Israel, and the consequent delay of their entrance into Canaan until the death of Moses in the fortieth year from the exodus. You

cannot explain the religion apart from the history nor the history apart from the religion. Criticism may, in the judgment of the critics, pull the whole fabric to pieces; but it is powerless to supply anything even reasonably probable in its place.

A great deal has been made, in the interest of this destructive criticism, of the alleged inconsistency between the provision in Deuteronomy, chap. 12, for a single sanctuary in the land of Canaan and the record in the subsequent history of altars set up and sacrifices offered at various centres of worship: as by the people at Bochim; by Gideon at Ophrah; by Manoah at Zorah; by Samuel at Ramah, Gilgal, Bethlehem; by David on Moriah; by Elijah on Carmel, Judg. 2:5; 6:24; 13:16; 1 Sam. 7:17; 10:8; 16:2; 2 Sam. 24:25; 1 Kings 18:30.

The discrepancy, if there be one, belongs to Deuteronomy itself, which commands the offering of burnt-offerings and peace-offerings on an altar of stone on Mount Ebal. It is true that when this command was carried out by Joshua the tabernacle was probably set up at Shechem, Josh. 8:30-35; but the sacrifices were offered, not on the brazen altar, but on the separate altar on Mount Ebal. The fact is that all these cases are covered by the promise connected with the origi-

nal law regarding altars, Exod. 20:24-26: "In all places where I record my name I will come to thee and I will bless thee." Sacred associations naturally gathered round any spot where the tabernacle stood for a considerable space of time. Unity of national worship was not endangered by the building of an altar on any special occasion by a recognized representative of divine authority, like Samuel or Elijah. What would endanger it was the practice of private unauthorized sacrifices, such as those condemned in 1 Kings 3:2; 22:43; 2 Kings 12:3.\*

As the recorded history of ancient Israel furnishes the only key to the religion of the Old Testament, otherwise inexplicable, so the religion bears witness to the history. Solomon's temple presupposes the tabernacle. It actually contained the ark. But the ark and the tabernacle presuppose the wandering in the wilderness; which in its turn presupposes Sinai and the deliverance. The whole history from the birth of

\* When Solomon sacrificed at Gibeon the tabernacle was still there, though the ark had been brought to Jerusalem, 1 Chron. 4; 16:37-40; 2 Chron. 1:3-6. It is doubtful whether the tabernacle was for a time set up at Bethel; see Judg. 20. After its removal from Shiloh we find it at Nob and Mizpah; but these are probably the same; and Gibeon was so near that possibly only one sacred place is referred to under all three names. See "Tent Work," 2:105, 116-120. Conder's "Handbook to Bible," pp. 275-277,

Samuel attests the importance of both the ark and the tabernacle. David's institutions, which survived the Captivity and lasted into the Christian era, attest the national importance and numerical strength of the tribe of Levi, their sacred character, and the hereditary priesthood of the descendants of Aaron. How can these (joined with the fact that Levi was a landless tribe) be explained apart from a legislation coeval with the existence of the nation? In a word, is it rationally conceivable that a nation so numerous, compact, tenacious of tradition, yet sturdily independent, prone to strife, and obstinately addicted to forbidden rites, should have been persuaded (before, during, or after the reigns of David and Solomon) to receive a body of new institutions, forged laws, and fictitious public annals, and that this astonishing fabrication, unparalleled in all literature, should have gained that prodigious hold on national belief and reverence which the writings ascribed to Moses undeniably possessed after the return from Babylon?

The demands made on our faith by modern skeptical criticism far exceed in fact those made by all the miracles of the Bible; because in the latter case apparent physical impossibilities find an adequate explanation—to wit, in the exercise of divine power for worthy ends; whereas in the



former case moral impossibilities are presented for our belief with no explanation at all.

## II.

The intimate blending of history and religion, which we have noted as the first great characteristic of the Hebrew Scriptures, is the condition of the two other characteristics also indicated: UNITY and DEVELOPMENT. These may be best considered not separately but together; for development implies unity, and the unity discoverable in the Bible is a unity of growth—not formal and mechanical, but vital, internal, spiritual.

Clearly, if the books of the Old Testament possess any real unity, it must be of this nature. For they do not compose a book in any ordinary sense of the word. They are a library, a literature. They range over a thousand years. Their writers differ widely in character, genius, education, position. They reflect the most opposite phases of national life. Diversity of contents and variety of form could scarcely be more strongly exemplified than in this collection of annals, laws, biography, poems, aphorisms, prophetic oracles. If the unity of these sacred writings were merely artificial and conventional, conferred by authority and custom, it would dissolve at the touch of serious examination. If, on the contrary, deep be-

low this diversified and broken surface we find a unity of thought, an unbroken vein of religious teaching, growing richer from age to age, then this unity is a fact more important than the diversity. It must have an adequate cause. It demands an intelligent explanation. If natural causes cannot explain it, we must infer supernatural. If human authors could not, or manifestly did not, combine to produce it, the only possible explanation is divine authorship.\*

Does such unity, progressively unfolding itself, actually characterize the Hebrew sacred writings? To answer this question let us take first the fundamental idea of all religion—the being and character of God. The book of Genesis opens with affirming the deepest relation we and all other beings sustain to God as our Creator. Metaphysical questions as to self-existence, eternity, infinity, space, and time, the nature of matter and of mind, are never raised. Yet, in fact, they all lie wrapped up in the plain historical statement that “in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.” Creation appears in the record as an orderly process, crowned with the birth of man. Its successive stages—the hidden

\* For a powerful exhibition of some aspects of this great subject see Henry Rogers' "Lectures on the Superhuman Origin of the Bible," pp. 152-181.

stirring of life under the dark waters, the dawn of light, the formation of an atmosphere, the upheaval of islands and continents, the growth of plant life, the appearance in the clear sky of sun, moon, and stars, the appearance on the stage of life of fishes and other marine animals, reptiles, birds, mammals, last of all man—display a wonderful agreement with the latest discoveries of human science. But a height is reached of which science knows nothing in the account of the Creator's beneficent delight in his work, Gen. 1:31, and in the assertion of a divine type and purpose in man, the lord of creation, ver. 26-28.

Man is represented as from the first placed in direct moral relations with his Maker. A specially prepared home, work, the Sabbath, marriage, and a positive command, the test of obedience, bless and fence his life. Disobedience is represented as putting him, as it needs must, in a sadly altered relation to God. He is called to account, found guilty, sentenced to the loss of Eden, made subject to death. No explanation is given of that awful word. If bodily dissolution, simple animal death, be meant, then it is evident that execution of the penalty, "in the day that thou eatest thereof, dying thou shalt die," was deferred. If the history means us to understand that it was rigorously carried out, then evidently

something else is meant than animal death, however closely connected with it. Nevertheless, man retains his highest privilege—direct converse with his Maker. Not to repeat here what has already been said concerning sacrifice, we see God reasoning with Cain when his mind is dull with discontent and murderous jealousy, seeking to win him to repentance, and cheering him, as Adam and Eve were cheered after their transgression, with words of grace and promise. Gen. 4:6, 7.

We shall search in vain the sacred books and the entire literature of pagan nations for any adequate parallel to these representations of the absolute authority and just severity of the Creator, united with fatherly tenderness towards the sinner and effort to win him to repentance or hold him back from sin. But parallels abound throughout the Hebrew Scriptures. As examples we may refer to the startling description of divine sorrow over man's sin, and the hundred and twenty years' respite granted in Noah's time to the doomed world, Gen. 6:3, 5-7; the place assigned to intercession, as of Abraham for Sodom, of Moses for Israel, of Job for his friends, Gen. 18:23-33; Exod. 32:30, ff.; 33:6, 7; Job 1:5; 42:8; the pathetic warnings of Moses to Israel, e. g., Deut. 8:30; the echo of those warnings by his successor,

Joshua, Josh. 24:14-25; Samuel's faithful and solemn rebuke to the National Assembly, joined with the assurance that the Lord would "not forsake his people, for his great name's sake," 1 Sam. 12:7-25; Isaiah's call to come and reason together with God, joined with a gracious promise of pardon to the penitent, Isa. 1:18; Jeremiah's thunderbolts of terror, flashing and pealing through a tempest of tears, Jer. 2:2-13; 4:1-9; 5:9-31; 9:1-24; Ezekiel's trumpet-blast of warning, Ezek. 33:7-20; the homely remonstrance and final warning of the latest of the prophets, Mal. 1:6-11: 4:1. The list might be indefinitely extended. The preaching of John the Baptist, the last prophet of the Old Testament, sounded afresh the key-note which thus rings through the Hebrew Bible. Its full-toned harmony is heard in the preaching of Jesus: in his invitation to the "laboring and heavy laden," his picture of the prodigal returning to his father, his lament over impenitent Jerusalem.

From these specimens it is clear that a consistent strain of teaching, in the form not of dogma but of historic narrative and practical appeal, pervades the books of the Old Testament. Human life is everywhere regarded in direct moral relation to divine law, authority, and mercy. The appeal is sometimes chiefly to the nation,



sometimes to individuals. But in both cases one fact is to be noted, unaccountable, I think, on the supposition that we have here no divine message, but simply men seeking to instruct their fellows. The aim throughout is not to inform and convince the intellect, but to affect and control the affections, conscience, and conduct.

The portraiture of the divine character thus progressively set forth must be further studied, if we desire any clear view of it, in two words of very frequent recurrence and high significance—"righteous," or "just," and "holy." The words intimately connected with these must of course be included. The intuitive belief in the justice of God as "Judge of all the earth" is the foundation of Abraham's plea for Sodom. A sense of justice and a keen, hot resentment against injustice spring up so soon in the breasts of children that we are sure human language very early contained words to denote these feelings. As soon as men formed any notion of moral goodness, human or divine, the attribute of righteousness must inevitably have entered into it.

"Holiness" is a more difficult, more advanced idea. It does not naturally spring up in a child's mind. The words expressing it do not occur in Genesis, excepting in the statement that God blessed and sanctified, hallowed or made holy, the

seventh day. This excepted, the notion of holiness meets us first in the command to Moses to strip off his sandals because he was standing on "holy ground," *Exod.* 3:5. The spot was consecrated by the divine Presence. The original meaning of this group of words seems to have been separation, *q. d.*, to God's service: consecration. A difficulty obviously arises in the transference of such words to God himself. What is really meant by the command "Be ye holy, for I am holy"? The reply must be sought not in logic but in feeling. Moral ideas enter the intellect through the emotions. Reverence, awe, rigorously pure worship, imply corresponding qualities in Him to whom they are due. The stronger the emotions the more vivid the idea. The faultless purity, rigid separation, absolute surrender, mysterious reverence with which the Mosaic law invested every thing or person consecrated to God, trained the worshipper's feelings regarding God, and these feelings gave birth to ideas in their own likeness. God's own innate holiness came to be recognized as the fountain from which the holiness belonging to things, persons, actions, times, places, streamed forth. Hence the central idea of holiness in the Old Testament is essentially moral or spiritual. To suppose it ceremonial because largely taught by ceremonies is a shallow

but fatal error. The smallest amount of intelligent reflection must have taught the Hebrew worshipper that ceremonial, ritual holiness could not belong to God. God's holiness could mean nothing less than that nature and character which make him supremely worthy of worship and love, what in modern phrase we express by "supreme moral excellence," or "spiritual perfection."

The importance of this fact in regard to our inquiry into the origin of the Hebrew religion cannot be exaggerated. It lies at the very heart of that religion. No explanation is worth looking at which does not account for it. The evidence of its reality must be sought in careful study, not only of the books of Moses, but of the commentary supplied by later writings—especially the Psalms, Proverbs, and prophetic books—on the view of divine holiness actually held and taught by the religious authorities of the nation. It pertains, however, to the very outset of such study to bear in mind that the Ten Commandments—the starting-point of the whole law—are not ritual, but moral. The tenth refers purely to inward desire and will. Comp. Rom. 7:7. The law of the Sabbath is no exception, for abstinence from labor is not a ceremony, but as practical a thing as abstinence from theft or perjury; and the moral results of the religious observance of

the Sabbath are as real and wide-reaching as those of obedience to any other commandment.

Many readers will be aware that a completely different view is maintained by critics and divines of undoubted ability and scholarship, who claim to stand in the front rank as leaders of Biblical science and of theological thought. In the movement long and strenuously carried on for the disintegration of the Bible, an important place is filled by the view that the Levitical or legal teaching and the prophetic teaching of the Old Testament Scripture are independent, inconsistent, and contradictory. If David—to whom the organization of the priests and Levites, the regulations of the temple ritual, and the very building of the temple were owing—says that “the law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul,” and prays to be kept from “secret faults,” and to have “a clean heart and a right spirit;” if Solomon declares “the fear of the Lord” to consist in departing from evil, and “the knowledge of God” to be inseparable from “righteousness and judgment and equity, yea, every good path;” if Isaiah and Amos speak with scorn of sacrifices and prayers offered by those “whose hands are full of blood;” if Micah asks, “What doth the Lord require of thee but to do justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with thy

God?" it is maintained that the strong, clear, deep stream of teaching of which these are samples must flow from another fountain than that which teaches that "the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh." Heb. 9:8-14.

Of course, this school of critics deny that Moses was the author of Deuteronomy; otherwise their view would be at once convicted of error, since none of the prophets can go beyond the simple, comprehensive statements of Deuteronomy, which describe religion as essentially consisting in love, faith, and obedience; e. g., Deut. 6:4, 5; 8:1-3; 10:12-21; 13:4; 15:7-10; 30:1-6, 11-15, 20. Perhaps a sufficient refutation of the view in question is supplied by the hundred and nineteenth Psalm. This perfectly unique composition gives us the views and feelings of a pious Israelite (of what tribe, rank, or calling we have no means of guessing) concerning the divine law. The written word of God, under a great variety of names (the Rabbins reckon *ten*), is here described as an ideally perfect standard of character and conduct, "righteous and very faithful," "very pure," and "exceeding broad," by giving heed to which the young man may "cleanse his way," the afflicted servant of God be quickened



and comforted, the entrance of which "giveth light, it giveth understanding to the simple." "Thy righteousness," exclaims the Psalmist, "is an everlasting righteousness, and Thy law is the truth." It seems impossible to rise to a higher conception of divine truth, or a loftier level of spiritual temper and thought, than this remarkable Psalm exhibits. Is it critical acumen, or is it mere blindness, which can discern in that law in which the Psalmist beheld such divine wonders nothing but the work of priests and forgers; a mélange of superstitious inventions, heathen traditions, fictitious histories, and pious frauds?\*

One other point, the importance of which cannot be overestimated, demands careful consideration. Over against the conceptions of divine righteousness, holiness, and purity the Hebrew Scriptures set that of their dark opposite—human sin. The one cannot be understood apart from the other. No theory of the origin of the Hebrew religion merits serious attention which cannot give an honest and satisfactory reply to the question, *Whence was the idea of sin which pervades the Old Testament Scriptures derived?*

\* These are not random words, but a guarded and a moderate statement of what is implied necessarily in the theory that the laws of Moses were not given by God, and that the so-called books of Moses were forgeries of later ages.

Not even the poetic and historic literature, far less the sacred books, of all other ancient nations, can stand comparison with the Hebrew Scriptures in human interest. No phase of human life is unreflected in that wondrous mirror, no note is left untouched throughout the diapason of human emotion. Every vicissitude of human fortune finds a place in these pages, from the throne to the dungeon, from the cradle to the grave. Every type of human character is represented, from the most heroic greatness or saintliest purity to the most unbridled and revolting wickedness. A procession of empires passes across that narrow stage. We hear the jubilant songs of harvest and vintage, the music of feasts, the stern hymn of warriors, the pæan of victory, the choral chant of temple worship, the wail of the dirge. Yet with this unrivalled fulness and all but endless variety of human interest, national tradition, and individual portraiture, it is no exaggeration to say that one dominant character pervades the whole delineation; one thought underlies the whole, even where it does not appear on the surface; one deep, sorrowful note rings like a knell through all the music. It is that which St. Paul utters when, quoting from the Old Testament, he says that "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." Rom. 3:23.

For the proof that this is so, the reader must be referred to the entire body of Hebrew Scripture. He must not merely scan its letter, but labor to gauge its drift and fathom its spirit. In this attempt it is indispensable that attention be given to the terms under which this conception of sin is presented. The Hebrew language is rich in moral synonyms. Nine principal words may be noted, without separately noticing the various forms in which some of them appear. Our translators have observed no certain rule in rendering them.

1. *Chattath* (*chattaah*, *chet*): Sin; perhaps originally "error," "missing the mark."

2. *Pesha'*: Transgression; perhaps "breach."

3. *Resha'*: Unrighteousness; wickedness.

4. *Asham*: Guilt; perhaps originally "default;" the word is rendered "trespass" in the law concerning "trespass-offerings."

5. *Avōn*: Perversity; crime.

6. *Aven*: Vanity; iniquity.

7. *'Evel* (*'avlah*): Wickedness; depravity; properly "twisting aside."

8. *Ma'al*: Trespass.

9. *Ra'* (*ra'ah*): Ill; evil.\*

\* The English reader may find the occurrence of each Hebrew word in Dr. Young's "Concordance," by looking under all the English words, "sin," "iniquity," etc.

One fact of immense interest comes out from this list of words; namely, that the Hebrew conception of sin was moral, not ceremonial. This is as true of the law as of the historical and prophetic writings. The reverse might have been looked for. Considering the prominence given in the ceremonial law to ideas of defilement and purification, we might have expected these symbolic notions to be reflected in the terms employed to express sin. Not one of these terms has any such meaning. Not only so. Although it is certain that in Hebrew as in other languages the words used for moral attributes and sentiments must have been originally metaphors taken from objects of sense, yet in none of these Hebrew words is the metaphor obvious.\* Their etymology is rather matter of learned conjectures than of certainty. The inference is plain. These words were so anciently and so constantly used in a moral sense that the metaphoric meaning had died out of them before the Hebrew language took the earliest form in which we find it. They

\* They contrast curiously, therefore, with a great number of English words, in some of which the metaphor lies on the surface (as *upright*, *base*, *heartless*, *close-fisted*); while in others (as *right*, *wrong*, *perverse*, *transgression*) it is transparent to any one who has a moderate knowledge of etymology. Our word "*sin*," on the other hand, is a very ancient word, and seems to have had a moral meaning from the first.

had come to stand for the purely moral ideas of disobedience to law, infraction of right, and desert of blame and penalty.

The reader can therefore easily estimate the value of the assertion sometimes made as confidently as if it were a scientific discovery, that the idea of sin entertained by the ancient Hebrews was that of ceremonial defilement, to be got rid of by ceremonial purification, or of definite outward acts, to be balanced by other definite acts of atonement or penalty. The Hebrew language itself bears irrefragable witness that the pollutions and purifications ordained by the ceremonial law were but symbols of a stain they could not reach and a purity they could not bestow—the pollution of the heart and conscience by inward sin, and the purification of divine forgiveness and restoration to God's image. If the penitent exclaimed, "*Thou desirest not sacrifice, else would I give it,*" he spoke in perfect accord with the law, which ordained for such crimes as murder and adultery, not sacrifice, but "death without mercy." And if he prayed, "*Hide Thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities; create in me a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within me,*" he but interpreted the deepest lessons of the law, which shone through its ritual as through a transparent veil: lessons which the



great lawgiver himself declared that God's own voice had proclaimed in his ears. Exod. 33:19; 34:6.

We are thus brought back to the central conception which gives unity to the religious teaching of the whole body of the Hebrew Scriptures—the moral character of God in personal relation with mankind and with each human being.

This great central doctrine, which includes the truths of man's personality, moral character, and accountableness, is developed by means of human history and experience, especially the experience of sin. Four main lines of illustration combine to unfold this greatest of lessons. 1. Public history, especially as concerned with those calamities which the Scriptures represent as divine judgments on sin: as the deluge, the destruction of Sodom, the overthrow of Pharaoh, the punishment of the rebellious Israelites, the extermination of the depraved idolaters of Canaan, the Babylonish captivity, the overthrow of Babylon. 2. Symbolic worship and priestly mediation. 3. Prophetic ministry, interpreting God's law, will, truth, and promises. 4. Personal experience; vividly illustrating, on the one hand, the care and guidance of God's providence, and leading and teaching of his Spirit, bestowed on those who fear him; on the other hand, the life of faith,

penitence, prayer, and loving obedience to God. In this last method the teaching of the three other methods is brought to a practical focus. It may be summed up in the words in which the most sorrowful of the prophets, in the most mournful book of Scripture, utters his peaceful faith: "The Lord is good unto them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him." Lam. 3:25.

One of the strongest points of contrast between the religion of the Old Testament Scriptures and heathen religions is its purity of moral sentiment. Paganism deifies lust. The orgies of the wine-god in Greece, the abominations of which it is a shame even to speak, practised in the temples of Babylon and Phœnicia, the priestly frauds which made it hard for Roman augurs to keep their countenance in one another's company, find no counterpart—nothing but stern condemnation—in the religion of Jehovah. Vices shamelessly practised among the cultured Greeks, and sung about by the most elegant Roman poets, were branded with infamy among the Hebrews. When these plague-spots infected Israel, as they often did, it was always in connection with idolatry; and they were denounced by the prophets as the sure precursors of national ruin. Vice and crime are no doubt described, when the purpose of the

Scripture narrative requires, with antique plainness of speech shocking to our modern taste. The failings and sins of pious men are recorded with merciless candor. But never can one detect a trace of sympathy with vileness, cruelty, intemperance, or falsehood. Even those terrible denunciations of transgressors which modern readers are often at a loss to reconcile with the spirit of the gospel, draw their severity from that intense moral indignation against wrong, in which modern sentiment is defective, and which in those rough times was a needful safeguard of moral purity.

Yet the religion of the Bible is no less remarkable for its tenderness than for its severe purity. Once in five hundred or a thousand years, when morality is on the brink of perishing among men, the sword of justice smites and spares not. Hostile criticism, blind because hostile, fixes on these rare and long-deferred examples of divine severity, always prefaced by forbearance and warning, and overlooks the fact that the prevailing representation of the divine character places mercy, compassion, kindness, tenderness among its foremost attributes. Heathen poets have sounded the depths of human sorrow, passion, and pity; but nowhere in pagan literature, least of all in the religious books of

heathendom, can we catch even the echo of that full-toned tenderness and gracious comfort which rings through the Hebrew Scriptures, assuring us that "the Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercy." Even the lower animals are represented as largely sharing divine care and compassion. It is not a little significant that the rainbow, that smile of the tempest in which the myths of heathendom saw only a bridge for spirits to cross, is in the book of Genesis the emblem of God's remembrance of man's frailty, and faithful promise both to mankind and to the lower creatures. "His tender mercies are over all his works."

It has not seemed necessary formally to discuss the view which regards the God of the Old Testament, or of the Pentateuch, as a national Deity, and the Hebrew religion as but one among the many national religions of ancient heathendom. If the outline here traced be just, this theory is refuted at every step, and has no standing-room. It is contradicted by the basis laid for religion in the account of creation, in harmony with which is the constant prominence given to the claims of Jehovah as Creator of all things; by the express claim of sovereignty and ownership over all nations made in those very passages in which Israel is said to be for certain purposes a chosen people, e. g., Gen. 15:14, 16; Exod. 9:29; 19:5; Deut.

7:6-8; 8:19, 20; by the universal views of divine providence which pervade the whole history, and are grandly summed up in Psalm 107; and by the world-wide promises which ring like unearthly music along the course of prophecy, from the promise to Abraham, that in him all nations should be blessed, to such declarations of universal divine sovereignty and such invitations to all nations to worship Jehovah as are contained in the Psalms, e. g., Psa. 22:28; 24:1, 2; 67:2-4; 95:3-6; 96:10; 100:1, 2. The intense national pride and narrowness of the Jews, especially as the time drew near for their ancestral faith to take its destined form as the universal religion, afford a moral demonstration that these anticipations in the Old Testament Scriptures of the world-wide philanthropy of the New owe their inspiration to a higher source than Semitic religiousness or Hebrew genius.

The foregoing review, necessarily brief and condensed, appears not simply to warrant but to compel the conclusion that when the most has been made of all the parallels and resemblances which can be collected from the sacred writings of other ancient religions, the religion of ancient Israel, from Abraham to Malachi and John the Baptist, stands majestically and superhumanly alone.



Science herself may well be interrogated at the bar of common sense, and asked to give account of phenomena covering so vast a range of human experience, and of such surpassing grandeur and unique interest. The only explanation, apart from that embodied in the Hebrew records themselves, seems to be that the little nation of Israel, inferior in all other respects to all the great nations of antiquity, possessed a unique religious genius, by the force of which they outstripped in this one field the whole human race, and finally gave birth to the universal religion of Christ. This hypothesis will not bear serious scrutiny. In the first place, it denies the facts to be explained, and substitutes romance for philosophy. For if even the main outlines of Hebrew history are to be trusted, it was not the nation which produced the religion, but the religion which produced the nation. Secondly, it contradicts all the evidence respecting the character of the Hebrew people. The stern rebuke of their great lawgiver, "Ye have been rebellious against the Lord from the day that I knew you," Deut. 9:24, is reëchoed by the whole series of prophets. Two of the lessons of the Decalogue the Jews indeed learned from the Babylonish captivity, and never afterwards forgot: hatred of idols and reverence for the Sabbath. But their religious de-

velopment as a nation during the following five centuries consisted not in the perfecting of Old Testament teaching and the raising of public and private life to the level it required, but in substituting the rabbi for the prophet and encasing religious life in the most elaborate crust of mechanical formulas men have ever invented or groaned under. When the crowning test was applied, by the appearance of Him to whom all the prophets bore witness, the religious leaders of the nation proved yet more blind than the multitude whom they cursed as ignorant of the law. They could see in Jesus neither "grace and truth" nor "the glory as of the Only-begotten of the Father." They condemned the holiest, wisest, greatest, and best of Teachers as a blasphemer and traitor, and crucified their King. But in the hands of the crucified One the religion of the Hebrew Scriptures—the religion of Abraham, Moses, David, Isaiah, John the Baptist—freed from all that was national, local, temporary, became the one possible universal religion for mankind.

THE  
BIBLE TESTED;

OR,

IS IT THE BOOK FOR TO-DAY AND FOR  
THE WORLD?

BY

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# THE BIBLE TESTED.

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THE WORLD?

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THE word "law," or the expression, "the law of the Lord," is used in two senses in the Bible: the first confines it to the law of Moses.

On my recent journey home from India, after passing up through the length of the Red Sea, I turned aside and went up through the desert and climbed to the summit of Mt. Sinai. I stood on the very spot where, thirty-three centuries before, amid thunderings and lightnings, that law was delivered by Jehovah to Moses. I looked out on that beautiful triangular plain, some five miles long by three broad, shut in by high mountains on every side and coming up to the foot of the almost perpendicular Sinai—"the mount that might be touched"—from every part of which plain the summit of the mount might be seen, and the cloud resting on the mount. I remembered that, when that law was delivered, all



of the worshippers of the true God, Jehovah, in the then world, were gathered on that plain waiting for their divine orders—for that law the observance of which should make them “a peculiar people”—until the time when the Nazarene should appear, and, breaking down the encircling walls of exclusiveness, should gather in all nations, even us Gentiles, unto himself; and I thought how all-important was it that the law then and there delivered should be “perfect.” And it is perfect. The learning, the sagacity, the ingenuity of all succeeding ages have utterly failed to produce so perfect a code of morals as was there proclaimed. This Christianity’s worst enemies have always admitted. Ay, the “moral law” successfully challenges the admiration of the whole world as a perfect law.

But the expression, “the law of the Lord,” is used in a broader sense. It means the whole revealed will of God, as contained in the book called “the Bible.” And in this its broadest sense we are prepared to fling down the gauntlet and challenge the contradiction of the world, while we declare and maintain that “the law of the Lord is perfect.”

I. First, take it as a literary production. Where do we find such sublime poetic imagery as in the Bible? where such exactness and accuracy

of historic detail, as evidenced by known profane history, and more and more by each successive Assyrian and Egyptian discovery? where such majestic soarings of prophetic vision? where such faithful portrayal of character in biography? where such intensity and sublimity of the righteous denunciation of wrong? where such inimitable pleadings with those who needlessly are "weary and heavy laden"? where such winning portrayals of the divine life in man as in the parables that Jesus spoke?

But there is another test of literary productions, which but few books indeed can stand. "Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress" has stood that test measurably well; but how many other books are there that can? I mean the test of translation into diverse languages of dissimilar people, of different modes of thought and varied forms of expressing their thoughts and conceptions. Shakespeare translated into French, we are told, is emasculated; how if translated into Chinese? How would Mrs. Partington sound in German? Longfellow or Tennyson in Hottentot? Irving in Arabic? or Whittier in Choctaw? The Bible has stood this crucial test in the languages of all quarters of the globe. And in this matter I speak from some experience and from extended observation; for having been engaged for years in the

work of translating the Scriptures from the Hebrew into one of the most polished of the languages of the East; having, in my journeys, visited the mission stations of forty different missionary societies, laboring in twenty-nine different languages; and having conversed with many of those engaged in translating the Bible into those languages, as well as with others, in Europe and America, engaged in similar work—I know whereof I affirm when I repeat the declaration that the Bible has stood this crucial test of translation in the languages of all quarters of the globe. From Greenland to Patagonia, in the western hemisphere; from Iceland through Europe and Asia to the Japanese and the Australians, in the eastern; from the Copts of Egypt to the Kafirs of South Africa; from the South Sea Islands of the Pacific through the oceans to Madagascar, the Bible has been rendered into their languages with triumphant success.

Moses' history of the creation and of the early world; Joshua's wars and marches; the defeats and victories under the judges and kings; David's penitential prayers and psalms of praise; Solomon's peerless proverbs; Isaiah's splendid imagery; Jeremiah's doleful lamentations; Luke the physician's wonderful life-pictures of Christ on earth, and of the founding of the early Chris-

tian church; Paul's masterly orations at Athens and before the Sanhedrin and Felix, and his doctrinal epistles, so full of strong meat; John's marvellous revelation—these all come with the same force and adaptedness and sweetness and conviction in each of the two hundred and eleven languages into which the divine book has been already translated, and witness to us that, in this respect, it is perfect.

II. Again, take the Bible in its adaptedness to all the races and peoples, as well as languages, of mankind. And in this respect the American Bible Society has taken its full share in putting the Bible to the proof, for it has scattered it among all peoples. Are you aware how cosmopolitan this Society is? You know of its work at home, but how many of you know of the extent of its work abroad, in all the corners of the earth? It has fallen to my lot, during the last score of years, to witness some of the workings of the Society in the distribution of Scriptures in widely-separated localities, among people speaking a score and a half of languages; and I delight to bear my testimony to this phase of the Society's work. I have, myself, expended thousands of dollars of its funds in the printing and circulation of Scriptures in five of the chief languages of India.

I have seen its Bibles read and loved in the cities and villages and plains of Madras; ay, in the regions there so recently decimated by famine, many a convert to our Jesus has delighted to forget the gnawings of hunger while with his dim eye he read from these Scriptures of Him who gives to his children the bread and the water of life. I have seen it read with rapture all night long, in the native kingdoms, by those who had that day for the first time, and through the efforts of this Society, heard of and seen the Word of God.

I have seen it read and loved by the Telooagoos of Rajahmundry and Ongole and Cuddapah and Kurnool; by the Canarese people of Mysore; by the Tamils of North and South Arcot and Salem and Coimbatore; by the Badagas of the mountains; by the Kois of the Godavery and the Marathis of Bombay.

The Copts of Egypt I have seen gather under the shadow of the Pyramids to read from the Arabic Scriptures the story of Joseph and Moses and Jesus in their long-ago sojourn there.

At Beersheba and Hebron and Mt. Moriah we read again with a thrill from the Scriptures the story of Abraham and the offering up of Isaac.

In Jerusalem on Mt. Zion we joined an assembly made up of the descendants of Ishmael and of Isaac, of Shem and of Ham and of Japheth, while



from a translation of the Bible, made at this Society's expense, they read the oracles of God.

At Shechem and Nazareth we found its Bibles.

At Sidon the noble Christian congregation were reading from its Scriptures the prophecy of the destruction of their city and the sister city Tyre, and its wonderful fulfilment.

At Beirût we found its presses busily sending off their daily fruitage of leaves for the healing of the nations to the 150,000,000 who speak the Arabic tongue.

On the hills over Antioch 1,200 Christians gathered in one assemblage to hear what this Bible was doing in India, and read from the Bible in the Armenian tongue the story of the formation of the first foreign missionary society in their ancient city more than 1,800 years before.

In Smyrna and other cities of the Seven Apocalyptic Churches we found them trying to learn from the Scriptures how to light again on their ancient candlesticks the candles that had long gone out.

I have seen the workings of the Scriptures in Italy. Rome and Florence, and Milan and Bologna and Naples cannot shut out its light, and already there once more the morning star is rising.

In Calvin's Geneva, M. Dardier told me of the wonderful workings of the Society's Scriptures in

the cantons of craggy Switzerland and the adjacent parts of France. In the gay French-capital I found them pointing men to the city of gold with gates of pearl.

Among the Esquimaux and Nascopies of Labrador I found again the Society's Bibles, and saw how the gospel for the tropics is the gospel for the poles.

In the colored churches of North and South Carolina and Georgia and Alabama and Louisiana, I have seen devout Africans poring over the pages of the Bible, and have realized that neither race nor color need diminish aught nor add unto the perfect teachings of God's law.

The Russian soldier stirs with his bayonet the camp-fire to-night, that by its light he may read from Scriptures the American Bible Society has given him that which will nerve him for the morrow's struggle in behalf of, as he believes, his oppressed fellow Christians.

The South American republics and kingdoms are looking in its pages, as scattered by the Society's agents, to find what it is that has raised America and England so far above them.

The scattered Islands of the Seas are learning from it that though scattered and separated, they belong to the same fold, with the same Shepherd, as we do. "The isles are waiting for His law."

In Japan the Scriptures teach them that God rested on and hallowed one day in seven; and already has the Christian Sabbath displaced and replaced their multitudinous and variable feast days and holy days, and its thousand Christians are now on their bended knees thanking that God who through its pages issued in that land of darkness the fiat, "Let there be light."

The land of Sinim, slumbering through ages, is hearing now, through the Society's instrumentality, and obeying the divine mandate, "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light."

Show me, if you can, the race or people where the Bibles issued by this Society have not aroused the conscience, quickened the love, stimulated the zeal, dispelled the doubt, comforted the mourning, cheered the dying, among the scattered sons of the first and of the second Adam.

Since I first went to India, the Society has expended more than one and a quarter millions of dollars in gold in giving the Bible to the races of the earth outside of our own country. It is because of this cosmopolitan work that I, a foreign missionary, every fibre of whose existence is wrought up in the missionary work, stand up on every possible occasion to advocate the claims of this Society on the blood-bought throng of Christ's

sons and daughters. I would not, if I could, turn all the streams of benevolence into the treasuries of our foreign missionary societies—even of my own Board. The Bible must be translated and printed and scattered everywhere, or no missionary work could be done. A missionary without the Bible! as well try to cook without fire or heat; as well try to sail a ship without water; as well try to propel a steamer without steam; as well try to breathe without air. If the printing and benevolent distribution of the Bible cease while yet the nations are arrayed in hostility to Christ, then let it be announced to the world that the soldiers of Christ's kingdom have laid down their arms. Let it cease, and all the powers of darkness will rise and claim the victory as nearly won. Ay, the very imps of hell will hold a jubilee, for it is darkness that they love, and the Bible gives light.

III. But again, take the Bible as an *engine* devised for the performance of a certain work, and test it well and see whether it does that work or no. The Bible contains a plan devised for the redemption and elevation of mankind. Take the Bible, then, as an engine thus devised for the accomplishment of this specific work, and test it well and see whether it does that work or no. And it is to this view of the subject that I particularly ask your attention.

Is this *old Bible*, given centuries ago among the Jewish people, *now* calculated to do the work for which it was designed? or, in this day of progress and of the intermingling of nations, do we find it antiquated, and its day of adaptedness and usefulness passed away? This is, emphatically, an age not alone of changes, but of improvements. Fast mail-trains and the telegraph have taken the place of the old mounted mail-carrier, with his mail-bags thrown over the horse upon which he rode. The four and six horse stage-coach has given way to palace cars. The quiet stitching of the seamstress is replaced by the hum of the sewing-machine. There is scarcely a piece of machinery, of any kind, now in use that was used even by our grandfathers. New books, new systems of sciences, new methods in the arts—all, all is new. Have we made a mistake, then, in holding on to our “old Bible” too long? If so, let us acknowledge it like men and try to replace it with something better; but first let us put it to the proof and see.

Now, in testing a machine or engine, it is necessary to try it in all the different circumstances in which it is to be employed, especially in the worst. For example: when I was in India, during the war in America, the Government of India sought to introduce the best machinery for ginning and spinning and weaving the cotton growing



there. A proclamation was issued, and published in every country where machinery was made, offering a princely premium for that machinery that should best do the work. And when, after nearly a year for preparation, the machinery was gathered from the four quarters on the banks of the sacred Ganges, when the viceroy and his council and the judges had assembled to test it, it was tried not alone with the cotton grown there on the banks of the Ganges, but cotton was brought from the base of the Himalaya Mountains and from the plains of Tinnevely, near Cape Comorin, from the hill country of Berar, and from the plains of Bellary and the country about Bombay; and the machinery that best did the work in all, the long staple and the short, the coarse and the fine, it was that that won the prize and that is now doing the work in India. So if an ocean steamer be launched, it must be tried not alone on the smooth waters of the bay or river on whose banks it was constructed; for until it has crossed the ocean, breasting the mountain billows in a storm, no one can tell whether after all it be a safe vehicle for human life. So with every kind of machinery—it must be tested in the worst circumstances in which it will be called to act.

For the last score of years I have been engaged

in putting the Bible to just such a test; and that in the most unpropitious circumstances.

India is Satan's stronghold. Hindooism, with its handmaid caste, weaves iron fetters around its votaries. With much of truth in its scriptures, the Védas, it has degenerated into the worst of polytheism and idolatry; with its defective view of God and man, it has had no conserving, elevating influence over its votaries. The Hindoos are at once a very religious and a grossly immoral people. Intelligent, sharp, quick-witted, immutable in their nature, wedded to their ancient system, which is a splendid one though false, the Brahminists are the most able and determined adversaries of what they term the "new religion." If the Bible will work in India, then we may safely conclude that it will work anywhere. How, then, does it work in India? Let us test it in various ways and see.

And first: does this "old Bible," given so many centuries ago among the Jews, describe the human heart of to-day and the condition of man in different lands? or is it antiquated and defective in this respect?

On a certain occasion, some fourteen years ago, I went into a native city in India, where the name of Jesus had never been heard, there for the first time to show them and give them these Scrip-

tures, and to preach to them of Christ and his salvation. As an introduction, when we had assembled an audience in the street, I asked my native assistant to read the first chapter of Romans—the chapter a part of which some who call themselves especially liberal-minded tell us is too black to be true; that chapter that describes the heart of man wandering away from God and into sin, and conceiving vile conceptions of God, and then wandering away farther until at last, “though they know the judgments of God, that they which do such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them;” the chapter which many tell us is a libel upon human nature. That chapter was read. The most intelligent man in the audience, a Brahmin, stepped forward and said to me, “Sir, that chapter must have been written for us Hindoos. *It describes us exactly.*” The photograph was recognized. It had been taken centuries before and among a Jewish people; but the artist was divine, and the heart that was photographed was that not of a *Jew*, but of a *man*.

On another occasion I went into another city, there also for the first time to proclaim Christ as the way of life. As we entered the native town and passed up the main street, I noticed a small Hindoo temple, built upon the side of the busiest

street, with its doors open and the idols in at the farther end, so that passers-by could worship as they went. At the side of the door sat the Brahmin priest of the temple on a pedestal, unclad down to the waist—that he might receive the homage, the semi-divine worship, which the people were wont to render him—with a platter by his side to receive their offerings as they went in and out to their business or their work. I noticed it and passed on. Going up the main street, and looking here and there and finding no better place, we came back to this temple; and as I politely asked permission of the Brahmin to address an audience from the steps of the temple, he as politely gave his permission; and singing a song to bring the people together, we soon had the street packed with those who wondered what we had come for, and I preached to them. I took for my theme “the character of any being whom the intelligent mind of man in any land would be willing to call God;” and from the necessities of our natures I attempted to show them that in order to call any being God, we must believe him to be stronger than we and stronger than any powers that might be arrayed against us; that he must be *omnipotent*, or we could not trust him; that he must be wiser than we and wiser than any intelligences that might be combined against us; that he

must be *omniscient*; that he must be able, in all parts of his dominion at the same time, to be and to notice all passing events; that he must be *omnipresent*; that he must be a God of love, a God of justice, and so on. I had painted to them the character and attributes of God as we find them given in our Bible—not telling them where I found the picture, but drawing this characterization of God from the necessities of the soul of man. The intelligent men in the audience at once acknowledged the picture to be a correct one, as I went on from point to point, and admitted what I said to be true. At last, completing the picture, I said to them, “Now, who is God and where is God?” The Brahmin priest sitting there on his pedestal, seeing how intently the audience of his worshippers were listening to my description of God, so different from that enshrined in the temple at my side, and seeing at a glance, with his keen mind, that if this description of God was accepted as true his employment was gone, seeking to create a diversion, straightened himself up, and with his finger drawing a line around his stomach, he said, “Sir, *this* is my God; when this is full, my God is propitious; when this is empty, my God is angry. Only give me enough to eat and drink, and that is all the God I want.” Turning to this same old Book, I gave him that scathing denun-



ciation of Paul of those "whose God is their belly, whose glory is in their shame, and whose end is destruction." And then turning again to the audience and reminding them of the pure and holy character that I had described, I told them that "this poor, miserable wretch here is willing to call his belly his God." Amid the sneers and scorn of his own worshippers he sprang from his pedestal, slunk around the corner of the temple, and vanished down a side street. And oh, how the audience listened while I described to them Him in whom all the fulness of this Godhead was manifested bodily, even Jesus of Nazareth, the Saviour of all of them, in all the world, that will believe in him !

On another occasion I was reading from the seventh chapter of Romans that declaration of Paul of the power of sin over us where he says, "When I would do good, evil is present with me, and the good which I would I do not, but the evil which I would not, that I do." As I read it the most intelligent man in my audience spoke up, saying, "That is it ! that is it ! That is exactly what is the matter with us Hindoos. Now, does your Book tell us how we can get rid of that evil disposition, and do the good we would and avoid doing the evil that we would not?" How gladly, from this same old Book, did I point them to Him

who can create a new heart and renew a right spirit within us; who can give us not only the desire, but the power, to do good: "For I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me."

On another occasion and in a different city I read the description in the forty-fourth chapter of Isaiah of the making and worshipping of images. When I had completed the reading, a sharp man in the audience, a Brahmin, stepped out and said, "Now, sir, we have caught you. You told us that this was an old book, given long ago in another part of the world to tell us how we might find God, and how, worshipping him, we might attain to peace with him; but, sir, that that you have just read you have written since you came here and saw how we Hindoos managed it." The photograph once more was recognized.

But again, can this Book be understood by high and low, rich and poor, learned and ignorant? Can this Bible, that was given to a people prepared through generations by a special training, and standing on a very different moral plane from the Hindoos of the present day—this Book, with its pure and holy doctrines, its strange though beautiful and simple plan of salvation—can it be understood by those Hindoos who have sunken through centuries of moral pollution? Can it be understood so as to affect their lives and their character?

Come with me to a little town 150 miles to the northwest of my station at Mudnapilly, in India. Some fifteen years ago there lived there a Hindoo, an unlettered man—he could simply read and write, and that was all—who felt the burden of sin and desired relief. He had tried all that his system taught him, and still found no peace of conscience. There came the time of the annual drawing of the idol car (usually called the car of Juggernaut) in a city some thirty miles away, and this man, mourning over his sin, went there, for they told him if he would engage in the ceremonies there and join in the drawing of the car, the burden of sin would be gone and he could find relief. He went there. The first day passed, and the second day of the festivities was nearly through. That night it would close, and he felt yet the burden of sin. He knew that he had not got relief. He saw standing in the crowd a man with a book wrapped in his garments; he saw the end sticking out, and asked, “Stranger, what book is that you have got there?” Said he, “They call it the *Kotta Nibandana*” (the New Testament). “What is that?” “Why, they say it is the *Satiya Veda*” (*the True Veda*, as we term the Bible in India, in distinction from their Védas, which we do not acknowledge as true). “Have you read it?” “No, I have not.” “What does it tell about, anyhow?”

“Why, they say that it tells us how to get rid of sin.” “Does it? Will you sell it?” “Yes.” “How much will you take for it?” “Well, give me half a rupee” (twenty-five cents). “All right.” He took out the money and gave it to the man, and took the book, wrapped it up, put it under his arm, and went away. When he got home he opened it at the first chapter of Matthew, and stumbled and tumbled down over those jaw-breaking names in the genealogy of Christ, worse for a Hindoo than they are for us to pronounce. He thought that after all there was not going to be anything in the book that he could understand, and that he had lost his money; but he got through at last, and came to the story of the miraculous birth of the child Jesus; *that* he could understand. He read on, and read the story of His wonderful childhood and His marvellous life, His miraculous deeds and the messages of mercy that He gave to all around Him; and then, when he was beginning to think that He must be the one that should redeem all lands, he came to the story where He was killed and nailed upon a cross. Oh, it was all up then, he thought; but he read on amid his tears. He read of His lying in the grave, and then of that wonderful coming forth again from the grave, and of the scene when He appeared to His disciples; and with astonishment he read

how on Mt. Olivet, parting the clouds, He ascended to heaven; and then he turned over and read again in the next evangelist, in fewer words, the story of the same life. Then he read on in a third evangelist that same story, that is never repeated too often—Luke's graphic life-picture of Christ on earth. Then he came to the fourth evangelist, and there he read of the divine sonship of that Jesus of Nazareth, the Word that became flesh and dwelt among us; and he learned there of our connection with Christ, the branch with the vine, how He would remain with us; then he read the story of the founding of the early Christian church. That gave him more light. He read the doctrinal epistles, and feeling the burden of sin as he did, he did not stumble over those hard doctrines as some on this side of the water do. He read that story, that wonderful revelation of the New Jerusalem coming down from heaven out of God, the home of all those that believe in Jesus, when they shall arise and meet him.

Ah, that was the book for him! He read in the book that they were not to forget the assembling of themselves together on the first day of the week, as the manner of some is—of some perhaps in this country too—and on the first day of their week, which, singularly, synchronizes with our Christian Sabbath, he gathered his neighbors in



his own house to hear him read from "the wonderful Book." He taught his wife to read, a strange thing for a Hindoo to do, as they never used to teach their women to read; but he taught her to read in order that she might be able to read from "the Book." He learned in that, "When ye pray thus shall ye say, 'Our Father which art in heaven;'" and as they assembled thus on each Sabbath day they joined, after reading the Word, in repeating that prayer. Some years passed by and the man died. When he died he told his wife that they must not burn his body as the Hindoos are wont to do, but bury it, for Christ was buried; that they must not perform any heathen ceremony over his grave, but read from "the Book" and repeat "the prayer," and leave him there with God; for as Christ arose from the dead, so would he some day arise and meet that Christ in heaven. His wife kept up the reading on the first day of the week to the people from this book. Years more passed by. At last there came two missionaries into a village some fifteen miles from this place. They were preaching there to the people, as they supposed for the first time that they had heard of Christ and his salvation, when two men that happened to be there in the market-place stepped forward and said, "Why, sirs, what you say is exactly what the man of 'the Book' down at our

village used to teach." They asked about it and learned the story. They went down there, and found to all intents and purposes a little church of Jesus Christ established. It was the Book that had done it. They had not received baptism nor the Lord's Supper, to be sure, but they had that life in their hearts that was the baptism of the Holy Ghost. The Book had shown that it could be understood and could produce its effect.

That was among the lowly; how among the higher classes that have the Védas with their purer teachings, the Brahmins of India? How does this Bible work among them? Is it adapted to meet their felt wants?

Some fifteen years ago I took a long journey of five months through a native kingdom that had never before been traversed, so far as I could learn, by any missionary, and where the Scriptures had never been circulated. I took the journey, an exploring and Bible distributing journey, at the expense of the American Bible Society. We were warned that we should meet with dangers and difficulties. We did meet with them abundantly; but on the way the Master gave us such cheering signs of his presence that we were willing to go on. We had been warned not to go because of the danger, and were told that we would never all of us get home alive; but I read in my commis-

sion, "Go ye into *all the world* and preach the gospel to every creature." It did not say, "except Hyderabad;" and believing my commission was to be carried out, I went, taking with me four native assistants. I well remember one Saturday, when we had attempted to cross a wide river in basket-boats, and had been swept down the stream three miles in crossing. At last we had gained the shore, but we had been delayed so long that it was midnight, Saturday night, before we reached the town where we wished to spend the night. Camping outside the city, we spent the rest of the night. Sabbath morning in our camp we held our prayer-meeting, myself and four native preachers and attendants, reading from the Word and talking over the power and goodness of Christ; and in the afternoon we thought that though we had intended to rest that Sabbath, we must go out to the bazar and tell the people of this divine word. We went. A large audience assembled around us. We preached to them of Christ and his salvation. We distributed Scriptures and tracts among them, and came back before sundown to our camp, intending to lie down to rest very early, as we must start on our journey at half-past four the next morning, as was our wont; when ere the sun had set a group of men came out of the town with books in their hands,

saying to us, "Sirs, this is such wonderful news that you have told us, wont you please come back and talk to us some more about it? The idea of a way of getting rid of sin without ourselves, by the help of a divine Redeemer! It is wonderful! Please come back and talk to us some more about it." We went back. The market-place was covered with India rugs and Persian rugs, and with pillows for us to sit upon, for they said they wanted us to talk longer than we could stand to talk. There were stakes driven in the ground-floor, with little native lamps on them to light when it should grow dark, for they said they wanted us to talk long after it was dark. They kept us reading and talking until ten o'clock at night, and would not let us go. When at last we told them that they must allow us to rest, for we were very weary and had to start early in the morning, they allowed us to leave and we went and lay down to rest.

At half-past four in the morning we had arisen, our carts were packed, and we were just starting, when out came a deputation from the town with books in their hands with the leaves turned down here and there; for they said they had been reading the books all night long, for they were sure they would never have another chance to ask questions about them; and it was such strange

news, and so good if true, they wanted to be sure that they understood all about it, and they had come to ask some questions before I started. I said to my native assistants, "You go on. Three miles north of here, I understand, is the town of Pebéri. As you are walking and I have a horse, you go on, and I will stop and answer these questions, and then canter on as rapidly as I can and overtake you. If you get there before I do, go into the town and offer the Scriptures and tracts for sale." They went on; I stopped and answered the questions. They asked a great many earnest questions. When I attempted to mount my horse, they put their hands on my shoulder and said, "No, sir; you cannot go until you answer some more inquiries." I answered a few more and tried to spring on my horse again and go on, as I did not like to leave my native assistants to encounter danger alone, if there were danger, and wished to hasten on. But they said, "No, sir; answer some more questions; don't go yet." I stayed three-quarters of an hour and then went forward to join my assistants. I cantered on as rapidly as I could, and as I approached the town of Pebéri, which was a walled town with gates, I saw my native assistants coming away from the town accompanied by some natives. Speaking in the Tamil language, which was not understood



by the people there, I said to them, "Would not they let you go into the town? Would not they let you preach? Could you not dispose of any books?" "Yes, sir," said they, "we preached to a most intensely-interested audience, and when we offered our book and tracts for sale they bought every one of them; we have n't a single one left. They paid for them all and wanted more. We told them you had your saddle-bags full of books, and they have come out here to meet you and buy more books."

Turning to them, I said (in their own language, the Telooگو), "Brothers, I have plenty of books—you shall have all you want. But first let us go back into the town, and I will tell you some more about this wonderful news." We went back into the town. I saw that they were the chief men of the place. There in the square before the gate was the platform for the elders of the city to sit upon and administer the affairs of the town, as in ancient Jewish times. They escorted me to that platform and wished me to sit with them. As I preferred to stand and talk, so that I could be heard by a larger audience, they said they would stand too, for they did not wish to sit while their teacher was standing—it would not be polite. Standing there, I proclaimed to them again the gospel of eternal life through

Jesus Christ. When I had done speaking, I took my saddle-bags from the horse and offered them the books, and at once there was a rush for them. I gave out book after book, and still they pressed upon me until every book was gone, and then there were forty hands held out over the shoulders of those before them, with money in them, and they said, "Here, sir, take what money you please, only give me a book that tells about the divine Father that you have told us about." "Give me a book that tells about Jesus Christ and his salvation." "Give me a book that tells about heaven and how I can get there." "Take what money you please, only do give me a book." I told them, "Brothers, I am very sorry I did not know there were so many educated men here, and that so many books would be wanted. I have a cart-load of books that have gone on in advance, which I might have stopped for you to buy all you want." They said, "How far has the cart gone?" Judging from the time, I said that it must have got about three miles. They said, "If we go on and overtake the cart, will you stop it and let us buy the books?" "Certainly," said I. They at once appointed a deputation to go on and buy the books. Five were appointed. As I had been talking, I particularly noticed two who stood upon the platform almost in front of me—a Brahmin

with venerable white hair and noble brow, a very courteous and intelligent gentleman, and his son, as I judged from his countenance, standing at his side. They had interrupted me now and then, as I was preaching, saying to me, "Wait a moment, sir; wont you explain that point a little further? This is such strange news, we want to be sure that we get it exactly right." I would explain the point and then go on, and soon they would stop me again, asking intelligent questions, anxious to understand everything I said. They were among the deputation that were appointed to go forward. The people put money in their hands, each one telling them, "Don't you forget to buy me a book." "Buy me a book that tells of Jesus and his love." "Buy me one of those books that tell about the Creator, the divine Father that loves us." "Get me a book that tells how I can get rid of my load of sin." So they commissioned them and sent them. We went out of the gate of the city and turned into the pathway where my carts had gone—native carts with wooden wheels, drawn by young buffaloes.

We walked on for a time, they asking earnest questions and I answering them, when they said, "Sir, we are going no faster than the carts are; would you mind cantering on to overtake the carts and stop them; and then you must talk to us some

more." I put spurs to my horse and rode on. I had gone perhaps a mile and a quarter, and got into the thick jungle that intervened between that town and the next village, and was passing up a little tortuous cart-track through the jungle, when I heard the steps of a powerful horse approaching me from the rear. I had been warned that in just such a place as that I would be assassinated. Thinking it always safest to face danger, if there be danger, I stopped my horse, turned around, and waited for the approach. Soon, around a bend in the road, I saw a powerful Arab charger coming, with saddle and bridle bedecked with ornaments of silver and gold. Its rider had a turban with gold-lace trimmings, and wore a necklace of pearls around his neck, with a jacket of India satin interwoven with threads of metallic gold. He rode rapidly on, and apparently was about passing me when he saw me, and pulling up his horse almost on to his haunches, he said, "Are you the man that has been in my town this morning with this strange doctrine?" I said, "I have been in the town of Pebéri, sir." We had been told that this town was the summer residence of a petty Rajah, a feudatory of the Nizam of Hyderabad, but that at that season of the year the Rajah was at his other capital. He said to me—for it was the Rajah himself—"I came in

late last night from my other capital. I suppose the people did not know I was there. I got in late last night or early this morning, and we were not stirring when your people came so early. I suppose those were your men that came about sunrise with the books; but some of my courtiers were stirring and bought some of the books and brought them to the palace, and we were so busy reading the books that we did not know there was any second gathering in the streets. I wish I had known it; I would have sent out and asked you to come to the palace to tell us the news there; but when you had gone they brought some larger books, saying that the white man himself had been there and given them those books, and I was so anxious to see you that I ordered my swiftest horse, and I have outridden all my courtiers, as you see, to overtake you. Now, tell me all about it. Is it true? Is there a Saviour that can save us from our sin?" We rode on together, I on a little scraggy country pony that had cost me thirty dollars, looking up to him on his magnificent Arab charger worth a thousand, and as I trotted along talking with him I could not help thinking of Philip and the eunuch; and I tried as earnestly, I believe, as Philip did to tell my companion of Him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did speak—even Jesus of Nazareth, the Saviour



of all them in all the world that would believe in him.

We overtook the cart. "Now," said he, "let me have a copy of every book you have. I don't care what you ask; I will pay for them." One box after another was opened. He took out a book about the size of a small pulpit Bible, and said he, "What book is that?" "That is the Holy Bible, the Satya Vêda, or True Vêda, in the Teloogoo language"—the language in which we were conversing. "Give me that." Down it went on the ground. He took up another, of one-third the size. "What is that?" "That is the New Testament in the Canarese language." "Give me that;" and down it went. "What is that?"—taking up another. "That is the New Testament in the Hindoostani language." "Give me that. What is that?" "That is the New Testament in the Tamil language." "Give me that. What is that?" "That is the New Testament in the Marathi language. But," said I, "you don't want all those, for this large one contains the whole thing. These others contain part, the best part to be sure, of the large one, in the different languages. But it is the same thing, verse for verse and word for word, only that each is in a different language. You know the Teloogoo language best. If you take the large

one in that language you have the whole;" for I wished to save some of these for use further on in my journey. "No," said he; "if you were to be here so that I could ask questions, that large one would be enough for me; but you are not going to be here, so I shall have no one to ask questions of, and I will take it and read it in the Teloogoo language, and I will perhaps not quite understand it; then I will take it in the Canarese language, for I can read that just as well, and it will be a little differently expressed, and by comparing the two I will understand it. If not, then I will read it in the Hindoostani language, or in the Marathi or Tamil language, and comparing the four or five, I shall be able to understand it all. I do n't care what you ask for them, only let me have the books. I will pay for them." So he took them.

In the meantime the deputation came up. I found that the Brahmin whom I had noticed so particularly was the prime minister of the Rajah, his general manager, or *Mantri*, as they call it in India, and the son was being educated to succeed him in office. They all asked earnest questions, and kept me answering question after question and explaining the books for an hour and three-quarters, there in the road, before they would allow me to hitch on my oxen and pursue my journey.

When they had bought and paid for their books, and at last had consented that I should pursue my journey, I bade them good-by. But as we went on our way we could not help thinking of them and their earnest questions, and wondering whether the words thus scattered had done any good. We journeyed on, however, and at last after five months we came around to our homes, stricken down by disease, to be sure, that we had contracted in those jungles, but all of us were alive. We came back to our homes, and still we could not forget those people. We wondered whether in that town, where they had so gladly met us and heard us preach Christ, there would be any fruit from the seed we had scattered. Three years passed by—years of sickness with me resulting from that journey. We were still thinking of and praying for them, when the Lord allowed us to hear news from them. A traveller came that way—not a chance traveller; nothing ever happens by chance. God ordered, for the strengthening of my faith, and perhaps yours, that a traveller should come down through that unfrequented way, and that he should be overtaken by night at that very town of Pebéri. He was a half-caste—half Portuguese and half Hindoo. He stopped in the rest-house built for travellers, by the gate of the city. In the evening that very *Mantri*, the Rajah's

prime minister, hearing that there was a stranger in the town, came out to meet him, and said he, "Stranger, you seem to have come from a distance; do you know anything of the people they call Christians?" "Yes, I am one myself." "Are you? I am glad of it. Stranger, do you know anything about a white man that came through here three years ago, in the month of August, with a book that he called the True Véda, telling about the divine Redeemer, that he called *Yesu Kristu*?" "Yes; Dr. Chamberlain is the only missionary that has ever been through here. He came this way about three years ago." "Do you know him? Have you ever seen him? Is he living now? and will you ever see him again?" "Yes, I met him years ago away up north, and in about a month I shall pass within about thirty or forty miles of where he is now living." Said he, "If you get as near him as that, you turn out of your way and find him, for I want you to carry him a message. Tell him that from the day he was here neither my son nor I have ever worshipped an idol. Tell him that every day we read in that New Testament that he left with us, and every day we kneel and pray to that *Yesu Kristu* of whom he taught us, and tell him that through His merits we hope to meet him in heaven. Tell him the Rajah has the Bible read every day in his

palace, and we think that he too at heart is a believer in Jesus. Tell him we hope to meet him by-and-by, when we can tell him all about it—saved because he came here and brought us those Bibles. Give him this message, for it will do him good.” And it did do me good. When I heard that message I forgot the difficulties and perils of that journey. I forgot how we had been surrounded by tigers at night, keeping the camp-fires burning bright while we heard them roaring for prey in the jungles around us. I forgot how I had been swept away in the river. I forgot how we had been taken by the jungle fever and deserted by all our coolies. I thought of souls redeemed and heaven’s mansions peopled, and I said, “If in that one village the Bible has done this, why not in hundreds of other villages where we have left it?” Ay, methinks I can see the throng assembled around the great white throne, and it may be that among that throng some of those dusky sons or daughters of India may come to one of you, and grasping your hand, say to you, “Brother, sister, you gave that dollar to the American Bible Society that printed the Bible that came away out to Hyderabad and told me how to reach heaven.” “Child, you gave that dime that printed the New Testament that told me how to get to heaven.” And in the gladness of



that hour, will we ever, one of us, regret that we have done so much for our Master? Will we not rather wish that we had joined hands in sending this Word of God into every palace and every hut on the whole globe?

Does this Bible change the character and the lives of those who embrace it? I would I could take you to a little village near my station where they had embraced Christianity in a body but eight months before, and where the high priest of the temple near by came secretly to me in my tent and asked me, "Sir, will you please impart to me the secret; what is it that makes that Bible of yours have such power over the lives of those that embrace it? It is but eight months since these people joined you. Before that they were quarrelsome, they were riotous, they were lazy, they were shiftless, and now they are active, they are energetic, they are laborious, they never drink, they never quarrel. Why, sir, I joined in the persecution when they became Christians and tried to stamp out Christianity before it gained a foothold here, but they stood firm, and now in all the region around here the people all respect and honor them. What is it that makes the Bible have such power over the lives of those that embrace it? Our Védas have no such power. Please, sir, give me the secret."

Does it sustain its recipients? Our first convert in the new region, in the Teloo goo country where I went in 1863, was a young Brahmin. We knew that there was danger of his being murdered, and tried to guard him. But after a while he was decoyed away and taken over one hundred miles to a town where his relatives lived. He was immured in a close room. Nothing was left him but a cloth around his loins. In the room there was naught but a grass mat for him to lie on, with nothing to cover him. Day by day just a little rice and salt was placed there for him to eat, just enough to keep body and soul together; and he was told that he should never come out alive unless he abjured his new-fangled doctrines and came back to orthodox Hindooism. His grandfather, a wealthy man, offered half his fortune to the Brahmins if they would reconvert him. They brought the logicians, the rhetoricians, and the priests of all the region to argue with him. They had taken away his Bible. They argued with him, and they kept him for months. At last he escaped and got back to us, all skin and bones; he had lost all his flesh, but had not lost his faith and his trust in Jesus nor his love for this Bible. He had never denied Him. A year after that we met his uncles who had imprisoned him. They said to us, "Sirs, what is it in that Bible of yours

that gives such strength and courage to those that embrace it? Now, we had that nephew of ours right in our power. We told him that he should never get away alive unless he renounced Christianity, and there was no probability that he would. He expected to die from starvation there; but, sirs, every day, no matter who were there, he would kneel in his cell and he would pray to that *Yesu Kristu*, the divine Redeemer that he called God, and when he arose there was no doing anything with him. You never saw such a stubborn fellow. What is it that makes this Bible give such nerve and such courage to those that embrace it?"

Does this Bible quell opposition? It is quick and powerful. I would I could take you to a scene in that same kingdom of Hyderabad that I witnessed fourteen years ago. There in a city, a walled town of 18,000 inhabitants, the people had arisen in a mob to drive us out because we tried to speak of another God than theirs. We had gone to the market-place and I had endeavored to preach to them of Christ and his salvation, but they would not hear. They ordered us to leave the city at once, but I had declined to leave until I had delivered to them my message. The throng was filling the streets. They told me if I tried to utter another word I should be killed. There was no rescue; they would have the city gates closed,

and there should never any news go forth of what was done. I had seen them tear up the paving-stones and fill their arms with them to be ready, and one was saying to another, "You throw the first stone and I will throw the next." By an artifice I need not stop to detail I succeeded in getting permission to tell them a story before they stoned me, and then they might stone me if they wished. I told them the story of all stories, of the love of the divine Father that had made us of one blood, who "so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." I told them the story of the birth in the manger at Bethlehem, of that wonderful childhood, of that marvellous life, of those miraculous deeds, of the gracious words that he spake. I told them the story of the cross, and pictured in the graphic words that the Master gave me that day the story of our Saviour nailed upon the cross, for them, for me, for all the world, when he cried in agony, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" When I told them that, I saw the men go and throw their stones in the street and come back, and down the cheeks of the very men that had been clamoring the loudest for my blood I saw the tears running and dropping off upon the stones that they had torn up; and when I had

finished the story and told them how he had been laid in the grave and after three days had come forth triumphant, and had ascended again to heaven, and that there he ever lives to make intercession for them, for us, for all the world, and that through his merits every one of them there assembled could obtain remission of sin and eternal life, I told them then that I had finished my story and they might stone me now; but no, they did n't want to stone me now. They came forward and bought eighty copies of the Scriptures and Gospels and tracts, and paid the money for them, for they wanted to know more of that wonderful Saviour of whom I had told them.

What do our enemies say of the Bible? those keen-witted Brahmins who know their own Védas, with all their beauties, and are capable of judging of what they read. What do those our enemies say of this Book? I will give you the testimony of one of their Brahmins, not a Christian.

I had been delivering a series of lectures to the educated men in my reigon on their Védas and the Christian Scriptures, compared and contrasted. I had shown them by quotations from their Védas and Shastras that their scriptures pointed out one God, pure and holy and good, the creator and preserver and controller of all things; that their scriptures pointed out man in a state of



sin and rebellion against that holy God. I had shown them that their Védas pointed out the fact that sinful man could not be at peace with holy God until that sin was in some way expurgated. I had shown them that their scriptures brought man up to the edge of the gulf that yawned between sinful man and sinless God, and left him there yearning on the brink, anxious to get over, but with no means of crossing; that the Christian Scriptures, pointing out God as a God of purity and holiness, and man in a state of sin, had brought man to the edge of the same chasm, but that they, in and through Jesus Christ, the God-Man, had bridged that gulf; that Jesus Christ, in his human nature resting on man's side, in his divine nature on God's side, bridged the gulf, and that we could all pass over, dropping our sins into the chasm as we went, and be at peace with God. There had been in that concluding lecture a most profound silence. The room was packed, and the windows, all open, reaching down low, were filled with the heads of those standing outside who were anxious to hear. There were no Christians present except my singing band; they were all heathen. When I had finished, offering a short prayer to the God of truth to bring us all to understand the truth, whatever it might be, and rose, taking my book, to leave, a Brahmin in the audi-

ence asked permission to say a few words. I said to myself, "Now there will be a tough discussion, for that man is the most learned man in the audience and the best reasoner in all this region." But I had determined to stand my ground, for I had reserve ammunition that I had not yet used. I expected him to attack the position I had taken; but instead of that he gave one of the most beautiful addresses that I ever listened to in any language. I give you a few sentences to show you what he thought of the Christian Scriptures. He said:

"Behold that mango-tree on yonder roadside! Its fruit is approaching to ripeness. Bears it that fruit for itself or for its own profit? From the moment the first ripe fruits turn their yellow sides towards the morning sun until the last mango is pelted off, it is assailed with showers of sticks and stones from boys and men and every passer-by, until it stands bereft of leaves, with branches knocked off, bleeding from many a broken twig; and piles of stone underneath, and clubs and sticks lodged in its boughs, are the only trophies of its joyous crop of fruit. Is it discouraged? Does it cease to bear fruit? Does it say, 'If I am barren no one will pelt me, and I shall live in peace?' Not at all. The next season the budding leaves, the beauteous flowers, the tender fruit, again ap-

pear. Again it is pelted and broken and wounded, but goes on bearing, and children's children pelt its branches and enjoy its fruit.

“That is a type of these missionaries. I have watched them well, and have seen what they are. What do they come to this country for? What tempts them to leave their parents, friends, and country, and come to this, to them unhealthy, climate? Is it for gain or for profit that they come? Some of us country clerks in Government offices receive more salary than they. Is it for the sake of an easy life? See how they work, and then tell me. No; they seek, like the mango-tree, to bear fruit for the benefit of others, and that, too, though treated with contumely and abuse from those they are benefiting.

“Now, what is it makes them do all this for us? *It is their Bible.* I have looked into it a good deal at one time and another, in the different languages I chance to know. It is just the same in all languages. *The Bible*—there is nothing to compare with it in all our sacred books for goodness and purity and holiness and love and for high motives of action.

“Where did the English-speaking people get all their intelligence and energy and cleverness and power? It is their Bible that gives it to them. And now they bring it to us and say,

‘This is what raised us; take it and raise yourselves!’ They do not force it upon us, as the Mohammedans did with their Koran, but they bring it in love, and translate it into our languages and lay it before us, and say, ‘Look at it; read it; examine it, and see if it is not good.’ Of one thing I am convinced: do what we will, oppose it as we may, it is the Christian’s Bible that will, sooner or later, work the regeneration of this land.”

“Verily, their rock is not as our Rock, even our enemies themselves being judges.”

The Bible has always had its enemies; so has everything that is good, in the moral or physical world. In Fulton’s time the wiseacres of his day proved to a demonstration, as they thought, that his invention of a steamboat was worthless, and that it could not work. But when, on the morning set for its trial, the banks of the Hudson were lined with the anxious throng who had come to see it put to the proof; when the steam was turned on and the wheels began to revolve and the boat glided out, cutting its way through the placid waters of the river, shout on shout from river-bank and window and roof rent the sky. What did they care for the demonstrations of the wise men? The steamer worked, and that was enough.

So we will let the so-called wise men of this

day prove to their own satisfaction that the Bible is worthless; *but so long as it works*—redeeming, elevating mankind, causing the moral desert to blossom as the rose—*we will stand by it, so help us God!* It has had attacks before, and has survived them. At the close of the last century there were those who, after demonstrating, as they said, that it was antiquated and defective and effete, prophesied that before the middle of this century it would be found only on the shelves of the antiquarian; *but yet it works.* And while your existence and your names, O enemies of the Bible, are fading from the remembrance of mankind, the Bible that you despised, translated since your day into 150 more languages, is running through the world, conquering and to conquer, till all the earth shall be subject to its sway.

Friends, we have this Bible. It is our priceless heritage. Let us read it more. Let us study it more. Let us love it more. Let us live it more; and let us join hands with this Society in giving it to all the world, to every creature.



THE  
OLD TESTAMENT  
VINDICATED.

BY  
REV. T. W. CHAMBERS, D. D.

## ARGUMENT OF THE TRACT.

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THE value of the Old Testament, once unduly exalted, has of late years been sadly disparaged. This is unreasonable, because the two parts of the Bible belong together, and each is needed for the due understanding of the other. Testimony of the critic Herder and of George Borrow. The Old Testament is valuable for its truthful history, its impartial biographies, its ritual types of the atonement, and its treasury of lyric devotion. Hence it has been received by the church universal in every age as an integral part of Scripture.

Its ethical rule is absolutely perfect, and objections to this are only apparent. The extermination of the Canaanites was necessary and just. The *Lex talionis* does not justify private revenge. Polygamy and extrajudicial divorce were temporarily allowed only to avoid worse evils. Slavery was limited and modified, although tolerated in view of the circumstances. Provision was made for the poor and helpless and even the brute creation. The sins of God's people are never palliated or excused. Cases of the patriarchs, of Rahab and Jael, of Jephthah, Samson, and David, are considered. They do not show wrong ethical principles, but an imperfect application of the true principles laid down in the Decalogue and elsewhere. An illustration is drawn from the experience of modern missions. These records still of use for the instruction and training of men.

# THE OLD TESTAMENT VINDICATED.\*

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AT the Reformation the principle that the Scripture is the supreme authority for faith and practice was often so applied as to give the Old Testament more than its just due. Men insisted that the whole body of truth revealed in the New Testament existed in the Old, and that the patriarchs had exactly the same knowledge of salvation as the apostles, so that proof texts for all points of doctrine could be drawn from one as well as the other. This extreme naturally provoked a reaction, and there arose men who asserted that the Jewish religion is a system by itself, having no connection beyond that of local origin and chronological succession with the Christian. This was substantially the view of Schleiermacher. And since his day it has often cropped out where least anticipated. Even in orthodox communions are found those who habitually disparage the Hebrew Scriptures. Sometimes they assert that the Old Testament contains so much that is harsh and

\* Reprinted by permission from "COMPANION TO THE REVISED VERSION OF THE OLD TESTAMENT." Funk & Wagnalls, N. Y.

repulsive that it is a burden to carry. At others they declare that it is antiquated and obsolete, and that it is of no more use now than is the light of lamps after the sun has arisen. Serious objection has been made even to the Sunday-school lessons of the "International Series" because many of its selections have been taken from this part of Scripture, just as if our Lord had never said, "Salvation is from the Jews," or "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded if one rise from the dead."

The issue of the Revised Version naturally calls attention to this mischievous error, and it seems worth while to set forth the true state of the case. Any notion of the kind referred to is a direct reflection upon the divine Author of the Bible. It pleased him to reveal his will "by divers portions and in divers manners," so that it should be a gradual development running through a long succession of ages. Yet this was not done in the way of Mohammed, the Mormons, and other human pretenders to inspiration, with whom the second disclosure was a repeal of the first. On the contrary, the whole scheme is coherent, and hangs together as a progressive statement of truth and duty, the former part foretelling or prefiguring or hinting at the latter, and the latter implying and building upon the former, so that it cannot for a

moment be pretended that the posterior portion comes as an afterthought, intended to amend what went before or to supply gaps which had been inadvertently left. Evidently one presiding mind ruled over the construction and the mutual relations of both portions. Nor can the two be separated without violence and damage. Upon this point the language of the learned G. F. Oehler may be properly quoted: "We must not allow ourselves to be deceived. The relation of the New Testament to the Old is such that both stand or fall together. The New Testament assumes the existence of the Old Testament law and prophecy as a positive presupposition. We cannot have the redeeming God of the New Covenant without the Creator and covenant God preached in the Old; we cannot disconnect the Redeemer from the predictions he came to fulfil. No New Testament idea indeed is fully set forth in the Old, but the *genesis* of all the ideas of the New Testament relating to salvation lies in the Old." ("Theology of the Old Testament," Day's edition, p. 2.) All admit that the New Testament is needed to understand the Old; but it is equally true, though by no means so generally acknowledged, that the Old Testament is needed to understand the New. So many references are made by the Saviour and by the apostles and evangelists to the antecedent



revelation that any reader would stumble unless he had Moses and the prophets in hand. The two Testaments are not the same, for if they were why should there be two? But they are not unrelated, much less are they opposed to each other. Together they constitute one continuous body of revelation, which proceeds step by step from the beginning to the end, and is an orderly and consistent unfolding of the germ first given at the gates of Paradise. To discard or overlook the Old Testament is to rob the Bible of its completeness and to miss the assurance and comfort which arise from a sense of its wondrous unity as animated by a single life, although set forth under such varied circumstances and at such different times. It is to forget that it is one and the same Spirit who uses the histories and psalms and prophecies of the earlier economy, and the gospels and epistles of the later, to convey the Word of God to men. It is to despise that word of prophecy (i. e., of inspiration) to which one of the latest books in the New Testament tells us to "take heed as unto a lamp shining in a dark place," clearly implying that it is a revelation of the divine will with which we cannot safely or lawfully dispense. 2 Pet. 1:19.\*

\* "What Pliny says of nature, '*Naturæ rerum vis atque majestas in omnibus momentis fide caret, si quis modo partes ejus ac*

That this opinion is not due merely to doctrinal prejudice is apparent from the utterances of the fine critic Herder a century ago in the preface to his "*Vom Geist hebräischer Poesie.*" "The basis of theology is the Bible, and that of the New Testament is the Old. It is impossible to understand the former aright without a previous understanding of the latter; for Christianity proceeded from Judaism, and the genius of the language in both books is the same. And this genius of the language we can nowhere study better—that is, with more truth, depth, comprehensiveness, and satisfaction—than in its poetry, and indeed, as far as possible, in its most ancient poetry. It produces a false impression and misleads the young theologian to commend to him the New Testament to the exclusion of the Old, for without this the other can never be understood in a scholarlike and satisfactory manner. In the Old Testament we find a rich interchange of history, of figurative representation, of characters, and of scenery. In it we see the many-colored dawn, the beautiful going forth of the sun in his milder radiance; in the New Testament he stands in the highest heavens and in meridian splendor, and every one knows which period of the day is the most re-

*nen totum complectatur animo,* is applicable to the kingdom of grace in a still stronger degree." Hengstenberg.

freshing and strengthening to the natural eye of sense. Let the scholar then study the Old Testament, even if it be only as a human book full of ancient poetry, with kindred feeling and affection, and thus will the New come forth to us of itself in its purity, its sublime glory, its more than earthly beauty. Let a man gather into his own mind the abundant riches of the former, and he will never become in the latter one of those smatterers who, barren and without taste or feeling, desecrate these sacred things.”\* And this is confirmed by independent testimony gathered in the school of experience. Mr. George Borrow, who spent many years in circulating the Scriptures in foreign lands, makes this interesting and conclusive statement in his work called “The Bible in Spain,” first published in 1843 (I quote from the end of the forty-eighth chapter): “I had by this time made the discovery of a fact which it would have been well had I been aware of three years before—I mean the inexpediency of printing Testaments, and Testaments *alone*, for [Roman] Catholic countries. The reason is plain: the [Roman] Catholic, unused to Scripture reading, finds a thousand things which he cannot possibly under-

\* This quotation is made with some alterations from the admirable translation of Herder's work by Dr. James Marsh, published in 1833.

stand in the New Testament, the foundation of which is the Old. 'Search the Scriptures, for they bear witness of Me,' may well be applied to this point. It may be replied that New Testaments separate are in great demand and of infinite utility in England. But England, thanks be to the Lord, is not a papal country; and though an English laborer may read a Testament and derive from it the most blessed fruit, it does not follow that a Spanish or Italian peasant will enjoy similar success, as he will find many dark things with which the other is well acquainted and competent to understand, being versed in the Bible history from his childhood."

Nor is it without significance that nearly one-half of the Hebrew Scriptures is composed of historical matter. It is not history in the modern sense of that term, investigating the causes of events and explaining them on philosophical principles, but rather a simple series of annals, recording the progress of affairs without any attempt to analyze characters, to classify results, or to deduce the general laws of human development. The narrative portions of the Old Testament are usually considered rather as furnishing the materials of history than history itself. But it is just this absence of speculative deductions and of any endeavor to frame the general laws

that control particular events that gives the book its chief value. It is in no sense a general history of mankind, and indeed touches upon the world at large only in the beginning when speaking of the origin of the race, or towards the close when the symbolic visions of Daniel set forth the revolutions of empires that are to introduce the kingdom that shall have no end. Nor is it a mere secular or civil history of certain nations. The bulk of the narrative is taken up with the fortunes of the Hebrews as a chosen people, the possessors of the only true religion, among whom the church of the living God was founded, and through a long course of ages developed under local and ceremonial restrictions. The chronicle is limited to the record of occurrences, and as such is strictly true. This indeed has often been denied, but without reason. For the impartial record, telling the faults as well as the virtues of the writers and of the race to which they belong, excludes the idea of wilful perversion. Men do not invent what brings them discredit. But the annals are peculiar in that they set forth the dealings of God with the people whom he chose to be the depository of his truth and the means of its preservation until the fulness of time came for its world-wide diffusion. There is then a copious and continuous illustration of the principles of



the divine government in application to nations. The writers indeed hardly seem conscious of this; at least they never stop to make any reflections of that kind. But all the same they set forth the facts which show God's hand in history. Very many of the themes which occupy a large space in the works of modern writers—the arts, manners, institutions, social conditions, literature, and science—are wholly omitted, but the religious idea is never absent. For the people were under a theocracy; their real monarch was He who sat enthroned above the cherubim. And everything turned upon their relation to him and their fidelity to that relation. Hence the simple, artless chronicle has a value peculiarly its own, as representing in detail and on a very small scale the eternal principles which rule the world, and are sure to work themselves out in the course of the largest empires in any part of the earth.

The same thing may be said of biography, the charming and instructive literature which treats of the lives of particular persons. No nation possessed of any degree of intellectual culture is without its treasures of this kind, but all of them together of every age and land would fail to supply the lack of the memoirs contained in the Old Testament. One reason of this is found in the impartiality of the record. No personal, social,

national prejudice ever biasses the mind of the writer. He never stops to commend the subject of which he treats or to apologize for what certainly needs apology. The treatment is like colorless glass, which transmits the rays it receives without imparting to them a shade of any kind. It does not make any difference what position a man holds, or how much he may have been honored either by God or man, or to what extent his good name is identified with that of God's people, the evil in his life is recorded as faithfully as the good and without any attempt at extenuation. Such absolute fidelity is, or at least seems to be, an impossibility in our day. Indeed, the tendency in the other direction has been so strong as to give rise to the proverbial expression, the *lues biographica*. But in the Hebrew memoirs one is brought face to face with actual facts, and we see the man as he is, and not as his kindred or friends or countrymen would wish him to appear. Both sides of his career are given with equal simplicity and fulness. The same hand which tells of the patriarch who is so strong in faith as to be ready at God's command to offer up his only son, the heir of the promises, tells also how on two separate occasions, through a mean fear, he falsely pretended that his wife was his sister. The same book which describes the generosity of David at

the well by the gate of Bethlehem when the three heroes broke through the garrison and drew the coveted drink for him, recites also the hideous story of his dealing with Bathsheba and Uriah, the melancholy record of uncleanness and bloodshedding. The more closely the pages of these records are studied, the more evident it becomes that the reader has before him the veritable man himself as he would appear to Him who searches the heart and tries the reins. Not only are all the facts that are given true, but they are so given as to produce a correct impression, a point in which the most impartial and conscientious of merely human biographers are very apt to fail.

Its numerous and varied illustrations of the doctrine of expiation give a peculiar value to the Old Testament. There are those who pronounce the whole Levitical economy as inscrutable as the Sphinx, a mere trial of faith and patience. Yet its essential elements are plain and striking, as is shown by the degree in which the language used in describing them has entered into the vocabulary of Christians and formed the chosen medium for the expression of their experiences. The courts of the tabernacle and temple streamed incessantly with blood and the air was thick with the smoke of incense. The fire never went out upon the altar. The herd and the flock and the

birds of the air contributed to the sacrifices which were offered not only every morning and evening, but on innumerable other occasions. Confession of sins was made over the head of the victims and the blood was sprinkled upon the altar. The whole ritual was one continuous parable of substitution. It exhibited by means of a complicated system of oblations the way of a sinner's acceptance with God. It showed in type and shadow what was afterwards accomplished in real and abiding efficacy. It exhibited on the outward and earthly plane what was done in a far higher sphere. The blood of bulls and goats was intended to stand in marked and living contrast with the blood of Him who was a Lamb without spot, the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world. The wondrous tragedy on Calvary, which stands in the centre of the world's history, finds its best illustration in the Passover sacrifice of the elder economy, or in its twofold offering on the great Day of Atonement. One entire book of the New Testament is mainly occupied with the comparison of the high-priest after the order of Melchizedek and his work with the Aaronic priesthood and its unceasing repetition of oblations which never could purify the conscience or take away sin. To understand the terms of this comparison, to feel its force, and to seize the mo-

mentous underlying truth, we must have the Old Testament. Its explicit statements are of more worth than all the speculations ever set forth even by the most acute and brilliant of philosophical theorists. Its "object teaching" as to sin and redemption is a prominent factor in the experience of every humble believer. There are many questions about the system which he cannot answer; but its interior essence, its characteristic feature, has become the life-blood of his faith.

Further, the Old Testament contains the liturgy of the universal church. The hymns of the New Covenant are very few, the need of the believer in that respect having been already supplied by the Psalter. And while it is true that the service books of the ancient church contain many admirable productions, they do not come up to the majesty and the wide compass of the Hebrew worship, as shown in the Psalms of adoration. Neither Ambrose nor Gregory reached or approached this level. They tempered the boldness of the originals, but their admixtures of what is more Christian-like and spiritual toned down the ardor and lessened the sweep of the singers of Israel. "Nor would it be possible—it has never yet seemed so—to Christianize the Hebrew anthems, retaining their power, their earth-like richness, and their manifold splendors, which are



the very splendors and the true riches and the grandeurs of God's world, and withal attuned with expressions that touch to the quick the warmest human sympathies. . . . As to the powers of sacred poetry, those powers were expended to the full, and were quite expended too, by the Hebrew bards. What are modern hymns but so many laborious attempts to put in a new form that which, as it was done in the very best manner so many ages ago, can never be well done again otherwise than in the way of a verbal repetition." So said Isaac Taylor in his "Spirit of Hebrew Poetry" (p. 157), and his words are true. Nothing in all literature is more remarkable than the adaptation of the Psalms to express the religious wants of the human soul in every age and place. The lyrics are all products of Hebrew times and the Hebrew people, and yet they are found even in translation to do what nothing else does for any people anywhere. Joy and sorrow, praise and prayer, confession and thanksgiving, penitence and faith, hope and fear, all kinds, all degrees of human experience, are here set forth in a way that leaves nothing to be desired. The most acute and learned draw inspiration from this fountain, and the youngest and feeblest find the same words comforting and refreshing. As literature the Psalms repay the most patient and pro-

longed study; but as records of the heart under the impression of the profoundest spiritual truths they meet a response from multitudes who have no ear for melody and no eye for the graces of form. As Mr. Carlyle said, "David, a soul inspired by divine music, struck tones that were an echo of the sphere-harmonies, and are still felt to be such." In view of this fact the Old Testament, as containing the Psalms, has an immeasurable importance, and a revision of the common version a commensurate interest. If obscurities are removed, if the sense is more faithfully given, if poetical peculiarities are brought out more distinctly, while the rhythm and the music of the old translators are preserved, there is a very great gain both literary and devotional. The experience of ages shows that the Psalter will continue to be the model of prayer and praise for the hosts of the redeemed, and whatever helps these hosts to use it more intelligently and with richer enjoyment can hardly fail to be a lasting blessing.

In support of what has been said, appeal may be made to the usage of the church universal. All churches founded upon the New Testament have acknowledged the perpetual authority of the Old as an integral part of revelation. The erratic views of heretical sects, such as the Marcionites

of the second century and the Socinians of the sixteenth, or of individual errorists, have never, even in the darkest periods, obtained general currency, but rather serve as foils to set forth in prominent relief the signal unanimity with which Papists and Protestants, the Eastern church and the Western, have clung to the Old Testament as an essential part of Scripture. The same may be said of the experience of Christians in all ages as bearing testimony on this interesting and important matter. The moral and spiritual influence exerted by the Bible on the characters and lives of men has been exerted by it as a whole, and not by the New Testament alone. Perhaps it may be said with truth that in proportion to the depth and power of experimental piety in any age or individual has been the disposition to avoid casting lots upon the parts of revelation, and to preserve it like the Master's tunic, "without seam, woven from the top throughout." And even the brilliant but erratic Ewald said in his last published work (*"Die Lehre der Bible von Gott."* I. §141), "The truth is, the Old Testament contains a multitude of fundamental truths in such certainty and completeness that they cannot be more deeply grounded or better defended in the New Testament, but are everywhere presupposed as standing firm and inviolate since the old times."

But against all these claims in behalf of the Old Testament it is sometimes urged that its morality is defective, that it represents the earlier stages in the progress of ethical ideas, and that therefore it has been wholly supplanted by the purer and more elevated statements of the Gospel. In support of this objection appeal is made to the way in which the Hebrews obtained possession of Canaan, to certain of their social and domestic institutions, and to gross instances of wrong-doing recorded of persons recognized as true believers. In reply it is proper to begin with the assertion that the ethical rule of the Old Testament is perfect, absolutely perfect. It is contained in the Decalogue, which, after laying a firm foundation in the obligations of religion, proceeds to build upon that foundation a code of social ethics which never has been or can be surpassed, providing as it does for all relative duties, for life, for personal purity, for property, and for reputation, closing and riveting the whole by a precept which takes in the heart. The New Testament, so far from disowning or disparaging this rule of life, confirms and sanctions it in the strongest possible manner. Our Lord said expressly, "Think not that I came to destroy the law and the prophets: I came not to destroy, but to fulfil," Matt. 5:17—i. e., as his further statements showed, to develop

its deeper meaning, to guard against misconceptions, to remove false glosses, and to enable its subjects to keep it. So the great apostle said, "The law is holy, and the commandment holy and righteous and good," Rom. 7:12. Throughout the later Scripture reference is continually made to the Ten Commandments as the permanent and authoritative standard of moral obligation, Matt. 15:4; 19:17-19; John 7:19; Acts 7:38; Rom. 13:8-10; Gal. 3:10; Eph. 6:2; Heb. 2:2; Jas. 2:8-11; 4:11; 1 John 5:2, 3. Nothing in all history—nothing in the flights of human imagination—has ever exceeded the circumstances of majesty and awe amid which this divine code was announced to men. It was, and was intended to be, a complete summation of human duty.

But it is to the conduct of the people under this law that the impugners of the Old Testament refer. One of the most common objections is based upon the way in which Israel became possessed of the land of Canaan, viz., by the literal extermination of its former inhabitants—a procedure which is denounced as monstrous and inhuman. But it is to be said (1) that the wholesale destruction was the same that fell upon the cities of the plain and upon the world at the general deluge, a destruction which in each case was declared to be the punishment of great and mani-



fold sins; (2) that it was inflicted by the express command of God acting as the moral governor of the world; and (3) that it was necessary in order that the chosen people might occupy the chosen land. The only alternative was to make slaves of the entire population. But this would have been ruinous to Israel, first by the habits of sloth and self-indulgence which such a condition of things must needs have engendered, and then still more by the close and continual contact it would involve with a population degraded by a grossly corrupt religion and by a bestial immorality. Were the Hebrews to be segregated from other races in some one particular region, it was indispensable that the previous inhabitants of that region should be removed. And dreadful as the destruction of the Canaanites was, it was not too high a price to pay for the preservation of true religion in the earth.

Again, it is affirmed that the Old Testament in the *Lex talionis* distinctly recognized the right of private revenge, and made every man the avenger of his own wrongs. "Thou shalt give life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth," etc., Exod. 21:20, is interpreted as if it authorized individual retaliation. But it did no such thing. It occurs among judicial statutes, and is to be interpreted in the same manner. In fact, it simply

declared the penalty of injuries wilfully committed, and announced to all that whoever wronged another must make suitable reparation for the wrong unless he could compound matters with the injured party, which was allowed in every case save that of deliberate murder, Num. 35:31. The execution of this law—a law which is found in the XII. Tables of Rome, and which is approved by Montesquieu as founded in reason and drawn from the nature of things—was committed to the authorities. Our Lord's statement in Matt. 5:38, 39 does not set aside this judicial rule, but reproves the errors of those in his time who applied in private intercourse and for personal vindictiveness what was originally given only for the public administration of justice.

It is further objected that the Old Testament tolerated polygamy and extra-judicial divorce. In regard to the latter of these we have a full and satisfactory explanation from our Lord. He points back to the monogamy established in Paradise as the true basis of the family constitution, and one that was never repealed. But in the case of Jews the statute was relaxed, not because it was wrong, but because of the "hardness of the people's hearts." Woman being the weaker vessel was sure to suffer unless some provision was made to temper and restrain the fierceness of

men of coarse nature and uncivilized habits. Divorce was an evil, yet when made under the forms of law it was better than the continuous grinding oppression for which the strict seclusion of women in the East allowed unlimited range.

The same thing may be said of polygamy. This was never established, much less praised, as it is among the Mormons of our day as a useful and blessed institution. On the contrary, it was simply tolerated, and the providence of God showed very distinctly in the lives of the patriarchs and of the parents of Samuel, and in the experience of David and Solomon, to what evils it necessarily led. Yet, upon the whole, in a country like Palestine and in an age when women were cut off from all the social life of both sexes, it was doubtless expedient to allow a departure from the law laid down at the creation, and permit a man to have more wives than one, on the ground that this imperfect arrangement was better than general and promiscuous concubinage, and that the habit being so deeply rooted, it was wiser to regulate and control it than to meet it by an absolute prohibition in that rudimentary stage of human progress.

Slavery is another of the features of Old Testament life that are severely censured. Involuntary servitude belongs to an inferior civiliza-

tion, and, strange as it seems, marks a step in its upward progress. There was a time when all captives in war were slain in cold blood, but afterwards they were spared and put in bondage. Hence the name *servatus* (preserved) contracted into *servus* (slave). As a living dog is better than a dead lion, so it was better to become a living bondsman than to be a slain captive. The institution existed when the Jews became a nation. They retained it, but greatly modified its severe features. A native slave could not be such longer than six years, except by his own consent formally given, and in any event his servitude ceased at the year of jubilee. A foreign-born heathen slave might be kept in perpetual bondage, but a bondage unlike any that ever existed in any part of the ancient world. He never was regarded as a tool, a chattel, a thing without any rights. Nothing approaching to the language even of such men as Plato or Aristotle, on this subject, is to be found anywhere in Scripture. The slave had the benefit of the weekly day of rest and of all the joyful public and private festivals of the Mosaic economy. Express mention is made of the "man-servant and the maid-servant" in the Fourth Commandment, and also in the directions about the domestic feasts made upon the tithes and offerings, Deut. 12:18. The slave was a per-

son, and as such had his rights protected under the law. Above all, he was among a people who enjoyed the revelation of the being and will of the one living and true God, infinite in holiness and mercy as well as in wisdom and might. "Jehovah, Jehovah, a God merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in kindness and truth." It was better to be a serf or bond-servant in Israel than a man of wealth and station in heathen darkness, just as the devout Psalmist preferred rather to be a doorkeeper in the house of God than to dwell at ease in the tents of wickedness. Slavery was not prohibited, because the times were not ripe for such prohibition. A wise lawgiver always adapts his legislation to the character and circumstances of the people. Even Christianity did not direct the immediate overthrow of the system, but contented itself with announcing the principles and inculcating the duties which were sure in the end to break every shackle and yet create no social convulsion. The feudal system which once prevailed over Europe was in some respects as oppressive as slavery, yet its bonds were gradually relaxed in the same way, until now it has become a mere name. There seems little reason to doubt that the permission and regulation of slavery under the Old Economy was not only wiser, but humaner, than its absolute



prohibition would have been. It certainly did not proceed from harshness or indifference to human welfare. For the Mosaic code forbade hatred and revenge, Lev. 19:17, 18, enjoined kindness even to enemies, Exod. 23:4, 5, commanded respect towards the deaf, the blind, and the aged, Lev. 19:14, 32, and required tender care for the poor, the widow, the fatherless, and the stranger, Exod. 22:21-27; Deut. 24:17, 19. For these the corners of the field must remain unreaped and the forgotten sheaf must be left where it had fallen. Even animals shared in the compassion of the Hebrew lawgiver, Deut. 22:6, 7; 25:4. Such tender consideration for the weak and helpless incorporated into the legal system of the Old Testament indicates high morality and a very profound sentiment. Where is the advance upon these points which some tell us is to be found in the New Testament? That Testament contains nothing new either in form or in spirit.

It is further urged that the Old Testament contains numerous instances of gross wrong-doing, the perpetrators of which were yet regarded and treated as acceptable with God and made recipients of his favor. These are the falsehoods of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, those of Rahab and Jael, the horrible sacrifice of Jephthah's daughter, the deplorable misdeeds of Samson, and the crimes

of David, the man after God's own heart. In regard to all these the truth must be held fast that sins are sins, whoever commits them. The Old Testament never blurs moral distinctions, neither should we. A man's eminence or advantages rather enhances than lessens the criminality of his evil deeds. Take, for example, the most common of the offences already referred to—falsehood. The most of the lies that are told come through fear. A lie is the habitual refuge of a coward. But who ought to be less of a coward than the man who believes in the living God and regards him as his friend? The lies of the patriarchs are grievous blots upon their good name. But they are not condoned in the Scripture, but simply recorded as integral parts of the history and as solemn admonitions to every reader. In Jacob's case his subsequent experience indicates a very salutary dealing of Providence with him. A long and painful exile from home and the suffering of many deceptions from his father-in-law were a righteous retribution for the gross deceit by which he won the blessing from the aged Isaac.

Rahab is quoted and commended both by James and the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, but it is her faith, not her falsehood, that is praised. She believed in Jehovah and in Israel

as his covenant people, and for their sake was willing to surrender home and friends and country. So she welcomed and preserved the spies, and sent them home "another way," Jas. 2:25, and in so far was conspicuous for well-doing. But her deliberate falsehood was a remnant of her heathen training, for which no palliation is given or is possible. Born and brought up in an atmosphere of deceit, it doubtless seemed to her a very natural thing to lie in a good cause. The same may be said of Jael. It was a good thing in her to drive the tent-pin through the temples of the sleeping Sisera. In so doing she executed a proper retribution upon an enemy of the Lord, she took sides with the covenant people, and did what lay in her power to render their victory complete and permanent. For this she received the highly-wrought encomium of Deborah, and was pronounced "blessed above women," or, as some render the phrase, "blessed by women." But her treachery in inviting Sisera into her tent and her assurance to him of safety were detestable. These gross violations of truth detract much from her character, and yet leave the signal service she rendered to Israel unimpaired as an act of heroic fidelity to the side of right. She took a wrong way to do a right thing, and the singers of the triumph overlook her deceit and her breach

of hospitality in their hatred of the licentious and cruel tyrant and their warm sympathy with their country rescued from idolatry and degradation.

The case of Jephthah is different. He is commended as a hero of faith, and such he was in taking command of the people at a perilous period, in his wise conduct of the war, and in his triumphant victory. The one stain upon him is the sacrifice of his only child. He vowed to God that in case of victory he would "offer up for a burnt-offering" whatsoever came forth from his house to meet him on his return. His daughter came forth, and "he did with her according to his vow." Some have praised him for his self-renunciation in keeping his vow. All such praise is nearly as odious as Jephthah's course. His deed was an immorality, and denounced as such in the law. The vow itself was wrong, for no man has a right to take upon himself such an uncertain obligation; but the performance of it was worse, for it degraded the offerer of the victim to a level with those Canaanites whom his ancestors had driven out of existence with fire and sword. Jephthah had been living as a free lance on the frontiers of the country amid demoralizing associations, and this fact, while it accounts for his crude notion that any circumstances could make it right to do wrong, also sets in a

brighter light his wise and determined and successful leadership of his countrymen against the national foe.

Samson's case is similar. He was a combination of superhuman physical strength with uncommon moral weakness. God saw fit to employ him as a deliverer of his people, just as centuries afterwards he commissioned the weak, bigoted, and petulant Jonah. In general, the channels of divine energy are appropriate to their office, and clean men bear the vessels of the Lord; but there are exceptions for wise purposes, one of which may be to vindicate or illustrate the divine sovereignty. But whatever the reasons, it is certain that God endowed with miraculous might a man who never could resist the solicitations of a woman, but did in reality the shameful things fable records of Hercules with Omphale. His exploits in battle, when single-handed he contended with hundreds and thousands, were signal expressions of his faith in God; and the same is true of his death at Gaza. That death was no more suicide than that of any soldier who leads or takes part in a forlorn hope. He performed an act of retributive vengeance upon the national foes, and the sacrifice of his own life which it required was freely made, and stands evermore as a testimony of his self-renouncing fidelity. Much of his life



had been wasted, but what was left of it he dedicated to God. Having been restored once more to his gigantic strength, by one supreme effort he pulled down the temple and carried a host of his oppressors into a common grave. He asked and he received divine help, and justly is his feat celebrated as an act of faith as well as of strength.

The shortcomings of David, his deceptions, his severities to the heathen, his misleading of Bath-sheba, and his murder of Uriah, have often been brought forward as a strange commentary upon the phrase applied to him alone of all the servants of the Lord that he was "the man after God's own heart." But the taunt is undeserved. The phrase as it occurs in Scripture, 1 Sam. 13:14; Acts 13:22, was used to denote his prompt and unswerving obedience, "which shall fulfil all my will," and in the main was amply justified by his life, both personal and official. Herein he was a marked contrast to his predecessor, the bold and intrepid but wayward and self-willed Saul, who on two signal occasions violated an express divine command addressed to himself. The son of Jesse during a long and varied career served the Lord with peculiar assiduity and success, and often when it cost him a severe struggle. But to his general course of implicit, real, and cheerful obedience there were the sad and painful excep-

tions which have been referred to. It is not a sufficient answer to these to say with Mr. Carlyle, "What are faults, what are the outward details of a life, if the inner secret of it, the remorse, temptations, the often-baffled, never-ended struggle of it, be forgotten?" No doubt David did repent bitterly, and the expression of that repentance in the fifty-first Psalm has been of untold value to all succeeding generations, as it will be for ages to come. But the great point to be borne in mind in regard to these sins is that they were in no sense normal results of his character and training, but exceptions. And for these the Old Testament is not responsible. It is expressly said of the whole wretched dealing with Uriah and his wife, "But the thing that David had done displeased the Lord," 2 Sam. 11:27. The record has its value as showing how men that are eminent for gifts natural and acquired, and who sustain lofty positions and perform great public services, may fall and cover themselves with shame; but if so, it is not because of their faith but in spite of it. The Lord's honor therefore is not tarnished by the derelictions of his people, and the fact that instead of being quietly suppressed they are spread upon the pages of Holy Writ demonstrates the trustworthiness of that book. The sins themselves illustrate the weakness of human

nature when left to itself, and impress upon every reader the necessity of constant watchfulness and care. If the man after God's own heart fell so sadly and shamefully, who of all the sons of men dare boast and be confident?

It is to be observed that all these cases belong to an early stage in the application of moral principles to practical life. This does not mean that there was a progress in ethical ideas, just as there was a progress in doctrine all through the old economy. There was no such ethical progress and no room for it. This is shown not only by the Decalogue, which was certainly given from Sinai, and the many admirable provisions of the enactments accompanying it, but also by the fact that the cardinal principles of morals have always and everywhere been the same. Falsehood, fraud, slander, envy, theft, breach of trust, and murder are not more peremptorily forbidden by Scripture than they are by the common judgment of civilized nations, ancient and modern. No revelation was needed to tell men that these things were wrong. In the last century one of the Moravians who labored among the aborigines of our country said to a Mohegan chief, "You must not lie nor steal nor get drunk," etc., and received the indignant answer, "Thou fool, dost thou think that

we do not know that?"\* The superiority of Christian ethics lies mainly in the example it furnishes and the motives it offers, and only to a small extent in the precepts it enjoins, as, e. g., in relation to the obligations of the sexes. Our Saviour's object in a large part of the Sermon on the Mount is not to correct the morality of the law, but to set aside the corrupt glosses which the degenerate Jews had fastened upon it. Take away these incrustations, and the moral code of Sinai shines out as conspicuously pure and elevated as the utterances of our Lord. The Master did indeed a wonderful thing when he condensed the Ten Commandments into two, the love of God as supreme and the love of our neighbor as ourselves; but nowhere and at no time did he set aside or impeach any one of the ten words uttered from the blazing summit of Jebel Mousa. On the contrary, when the young ruler asked the weighty question, "What shall I do that I may have eternal life?" the answer came promptly, "If thou wouldest enter into life, keep the commandments," Matt. 19:17. No rational explanation of this utterance can be made which will not imply that those commandments cover the whole sphere of human duty.

But while all this is true, it is also true that

\* Loskiel's "History of Moravian Missions in North America."

the ethical principles lying at the basis of the Mosaic economy were not at once taken up into the hearts of the people and incorporated with their lives. It required time to bring about this result, just as it did in some other things. For example, idol worship was always condemned among the Hebrews. Yet when Jacob left Padan-aram, Rachel stole and carried off her father's *teraphim* (household deities), Gen. 31:34; when the patriarch himself went from Shechem to Bethel he needed to tell his family, "Put away the strange gods that are among you," Gen. 35:2; and as far down as Saul's days we find that when Michal wished to deceive her father's messengers by pretending that David was sick, she used *teraphim* to represent the appearance of his form in the bed, thus showing that these idolatrous images had a place even in this good man's dwelling. So in the days of Israel's imperfect civilization, when there was more or less of the moral chaos that always accompanies sudden changes, social revolutions, alternations of war and peace, of conquest and defeat, the development of character was not uniform; excellences in one direction were overbalanced by deficiencies in another; and even those who in the main were upright according to the divine standard, yet occasionally fell short in the hour of trial. A capital illustration



may be drawn from the experience of modern Christian missions. One of the evangelical denominations of our country has in the extreme East two thousand members in full communion and eight thousand persons known as "adherents." Recently two of the wisest and most experienced of the missionaries laboring there were asked how many of these adherents they supposed to be really converted persons. The answer was, "Nearly all of them." Whereupon the question arose why, that being the case, they were not received into the fellowship of the church and acknowledged as brethren in the Lord. The reason given was that they retained so much of their old heathen habits and tendencies, and their stability under the pressure of temptation was so imperfect, that there was reason to fear a relapse into some gross immorality that would bring great discredit upon the Christian name. Hence they were retained so long in this inchoate disciplinary status. Precisely this was the condition of many of the Old Testament worthies. The standard of duty was as high as it ever has been; witness the command given as far back as the days of Abraham, "Walk before me and be thou perfect," Gen. 17:1, and oftentimes there was a wondrous exhibition of moral excellence; witness him who walked with God so closely and continuously that

he was translated without seeing death, or Samuel, the early called, who at the close of a long public life was able to challenge a whole people to make good any charge of wrong-doing; but still, as a general fact, true believers had not grown up to their privileges, and often fell into that which was clearly and sometimes grossly amiss.

Nor is it without reason that the record of such things has been preserved in a book designed for universal and perpetual use. For it has been well said that in the history of individuals and of nations, as of the race, there is a time when the delivery of truth in forms as elementary and comparatively rude as those found in the Old Testament seems to be essential to the spiritual training of character. To this day it is known that some of the narratives and practices of the old economy give to heathen nations a clearer idea of the divine holiness and of human duty than even the more full disclosures of the new.













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